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**The Culture and Sentiments of  
Irish American Civil War Songs**

Catherine V. Bateson

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, History

**University of Edinburgh**

**2018**



## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Catherine V. Bateson

2018



## Abstract

During the American Civil War, an approximate 200,000 Irish-born soldiers, and an even greater number of subsequent generation descended soldiers, fought for the Union and Confederate causes. Their experience, opinions, military actions and attitudes of their families were the subject of American Civil War songs, with songwriters penning numerous ballads about them. The conflict witnessed the mass production of wartime ballad culture, with over 11,000 pieces written and composed between 1861 and 1865 alone. An estimated 150 were by and about the Irish American wartime experience specifically.

This thesis focuses on these Irish American Civil War songs and analyses the sentiments they expressed. Overall, the main topic written onto songsheet pages and in songbooks was the battlefield actions of Irish-born and descended soldiers. This study explores how military history was reported through song, following traditional oral practice patterns of using balladry to sing war reports. In particular, attention will be drawn to the proliferation of lyrical dedication and focus on specific Irish-dominated units such as the Union Army's Irish Brigade and 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia, and how their actions, along with other Irish soldiering units, came to dominate Irish American Civil War articulations and history. Within this lyrical attention the figures of Irish-born commanding officers, namely Generals Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher, come to the fore. This study also analyses how their own wartime experiences and articulations corresponded with song lyrics.

Beyond the battlefield focus, this thesis explores the way in which song lyrics sang about Irish loyalty and devotion to the American Union – and in a few examples Confederate nation – and particularly adopted symbols of the American nation, such as the Star Spangled Banner, as embodiments of the causes and ideals fought for by soldiers. Alongside this were lyrics that referred to symbols of Irish cultural heritage, language and a history of foreign military service. Irish identity can be seen on the surface of some songs, including references to Irish nationalism and the desire to gain Irish independence one day. Yet, as this thesis will argue, Irish American Civil War song lyrics reveal complicated support and sympathy for the Irish nationalist cause in the United States during the 1860s. Running through the songs of this study is a pervading sense and sentiment of American identity – that the Irish fighting and living through the war were stressing to society through song that they were committed to the United States as Americans first and foremost.

In addition to assessing wartime views of Civil War politics and military actions, this thesis will also explore the way Irish song played a critical part in the formation of American musical culture, with traditional Irish music forming the foundation for American tunes, and blending Irish culture into the American wartime zeitgeist. This thesis will demonstrate the way in which Irish songs were written, published and disseminated through American society and crucially circulated beyond the confines of the Irish diaspora. Traditional and wartime Irish songs became a fundamental part of American culture because they were American cultural outputs. Thus this thesis will demonstrate the important evidential role Irish American Civil War songs play in singing an unexplored areas of mid-nineteenth century Irish American transnational history.



## **Lay Summary**

This thesis examines the sentiments and culture of songs written by and about the Irish experience of the American Civil War (1861-1865). During the conflict, approximately 200,000 Irish-born, and an even greater number of second and subsequent generation descended men, were the subject of an estimated 150 ballads published in the Union and Confederate States of America. These sang about Irish wartime service, battlefield actions, home-front opinions and lyrical discussion about the conflict's impact on the Irish American diaspora. Within a broader culture of Irish music in the United States, such ballads sang of an entrenched sentiment about Irish national identity, loyalty and affiliation with their American home country in the mid-nineteenth century.

After the introduction, where analysis of Irish and song history studies is discussed, the second chapter of this thesis explores the wider cultural impact and influence of Irish music in the 1800s. The third chapter explores how Irish American Civil War songs were disseminated and spread around Union and Confederate societies. The following six chapters explore different sentiments and themes dominant in these ballads. Chapter 4 analyses the way songs sang about Irish fighting service and battlefield narratives; Chapter 5 focuses on the maintenance of Irish cultural heritage in lyrics; Chapter 6 focuses on the influence and appearance of Irish nationalist sentiments and sympathises on Irish wartime articulations; Chapter 7 discusses the way areas of wartime policies, namely the draft, emancipation and politics, were expressed in songs that provided Irish views on these subjects; Chapter 8 concludes by drawing together the predominant sentiments heard in Irish American wartime balladry. It focuses on the way in which these ephemeral sources sang of ardent Irish commitment to the United States and the diaspora's American national identity.





### Acknowledgements

Just as General Robert E. Lee observed that you could not ‘have an army without music’, it is also true that you cannot do a PhD without a wealth of support. I could write a thesis of thanks to all those who have helped and shared in this project along the way but a few must be acknowledged above all. First and foremost, unending thanks goes to my supervisors Enda Delaney and David Silkenat. They have provided many suggestions, comments and pieces of advice from this project’s first days as a thesis proposal through to submission. I am forever grateful for their generous supervision.

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Further thanks must go to all those who have offered feedback and comments at numerous conferences in the UK, Ireland, USA and Romania. I am especially indebted to the scholarly fervour of BrANCH, BAAS, EAAS and to SASA colleagues and members. My thanks also go to fellow Irish American scholars, especially David Gleeson and David Sim, for their support and aid. Particular thanks to Damian Shiels and Christian McWhirter who have responded to every question and have been willing to chat about Irish American Civil War history and Civil War song history from the start. There are many others in these scholarly fields to thank but I owe much to their conversations, source sharing and fellow enthusiasm with regards to the subjects in this thesis.

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### **Abbreviations**

BA	Boston Athenæum
F3	Fold 3 Historical Military Records
LOC	Library of Congress
NLS	National Library of Scotland
MMIA	Mick Moloney Irish-American Music and Popular Culture Irish Americana Collection
NYPL	New York Public Library
VHL	Vere Harmsworth Library



## Chapter 1

### Introduction: ‘Singing Ditties So Gaily’

The night before battle, in close quartered groups, the soldiers of the Irish Brigade gathered to listen to ‘a dashing young blade’ sing ballads. ‘It was honest Pat Murphy’ and it would be the last time they heard his singing. ‘A hole through his head from rifleman’s shot’ ended Murphy’s life the next day. The Brigade lamented the fact that ‘no more in the camp will his laughter be heard, or his voice singing ditties so gaily’.<sup>1</sup> Pat’s tragic story was not recounted by a fellow soldier writing home to his family, or published in subsequent wartime memoirs. It was depicted through the medium Murphy used himself. The tale runs through the ballad verses of *Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade*, written in the middle of the American Civil War in 1863. ‘Pat Murphy’ was a fictional embodiment of Irish-born and descended soldiers who fought for the Union and Confederacy. Whilst the song may have placed him in the service of the Union Army’s Irish Brigade, his imagined tale reflected the real experience of all those of Irish birth and descent serving in the conflict. The song captured the spirit of front-line singing culture in general and the practice of Irish wartime ballad performing in particular.

*Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade* was just one of approximately 11,000 songs written during the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865, and one of over 150 ballads composed that were specifically about the Irish experience during the conflict. These songs detailed the sentiments, opinions, encounters and actions of an estimated 200,000 Irish-born, and an even greater number of second, third and subsequent generation descended men who fought during the conflict. They also reflected the expressions of the sizeable Irish diaspora in the 1860s. By the Civil War

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<sup>1</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).



era, over 1.5 million Irish-born immigrants resided in the United States, comprising a little over 5% of the nation's population.<sup>2</sup> Although a small percentage of the overall population, their cultural impact and influence was significant. Irish musical tunes and songs formed and shaped many American balladry traditions, laying the foundation of the Civil War's musical soundscape. The songs Pat Murphy sung would have been a mixture of familiar traditional pieces from Ireland, Scotland, Europe and the United States, alongside newer wartime compositions that sang about the Irish contribution to the war effort.

This thesis analyses the songs produced by and about the Irish during the American Civil War. It focuses on the sentiments and culture of ballads written by, about and related to those of Irish-birth and descent who fought and lived through the conflict from 1861 to 1865. The study presented here places itself within the context of research into American Civil War music and song culture, but draws attention to the much under-researched aspect of contemporary Irish wartime ballads and their sentiments. It also sits within Irish American historiography that seeks to understand nineteenth century Irish American identity articulations. However, it moves in a different direction from a larger Irish American identity context to assess the way in which song culture provided its own specific expression of Irish diaspora identity during the conflict in the 1860s. With this innovative approach at its core, this thesis will demonstrate and state that the Irish involved in the war adopted a collective American identity that echoed from the conflict itself through to postbellum songs, as will be heard in the conclusion. The Irish who lived through and fought in the

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<sup>2</sup> See *Statistics of the United States in 1860* for "Irish-born Populations in Major U.S. Cities, 1860" census records (Washington, 1866). By 1861, the Irish-born population in the United States was approximately 1.6 million, Alan O'Day, "Imagined Irish Communities: Networks of Social Communication of the Irish Diaspora in the United States and Britain in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, 23:2-3 (2005), 403.

American Civil War had already become American and sang about this national identity association.

At least 120 of the estimated 150 songs produced were specifically about the war itself, which reveals the fact that the Irish in the Civil War were sung about more than any other particular group. This was a disproportionate amount in relation to the numbers who served and evidence of the place Irish-related song had in American culture by the 1860s. Not included in those figures are the countless songs produced during the war era that were set to Irish traditional tunes that had circulated the United States decades before the conflict. A crucial distinction is made in this study between songs/ballads – meaning the lyrics/words of compositions – and music/tunes – meaning the melody airs lyrics were sung to. The reason for separating the two is that they often had very different historical origins. Music tends to be far older and ‘traditional’; tunes were often composed in the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. Songs and lyrics, by comparison, were written at the time of the war itself. The main focus of this study is on the latter – the songs and lyrical expressions – but discussion of musical culture in relation to how music itself is a sentiment will also come under examination. It must be noted that several of the songs under discussion contain a myriad of expressions and thus appear throughout this study. Some songs are more relevant and detailed in their lyrical focus, hence their repetition as different sentiments come under analysis.

Every song in this study circulated American culture during the Civil War era. Effort has been made to find at least two copies of each ballad. Every song has been traced to print and digital archives. Multiple copies have been found to establish the fact that Irish American Civil War songs were prevalent in society beyond the diaspora. For example, eight different songsheet versions of the ballad *What Irish*

*Boys Can Do* have been discovered, with various productions made in New York and Philadelphia's publishing houses. This highlights mass publication of Irish wartime songs. The examples in this study are taken from songsheets, which contained only the lyrics and sometimes their musical air; songsters, or songbooks, which were specific printed collections produced during the war; some newspaper publications of ballad verse; and musical scorebooks that had music notation included alongside lyrics.<sup>3</sup> All original spellings and phrases are taken directly from the sources quoted.

A note must be made about the songwriters themselves. Some, like Harry Macarthy, Charles Graham Halpine and Tony Pastor, who are all discussed in this study, are known within American Civil War musicology. The proliferation of their writings and lyrical productions, alongside music hall and theatre performances, made them household names in mid-nineteenth century American cultural society. However, most of the songs quoted here were written by unknown authors – soldiers, sailors, professional songwriters, stage performers, journalists, publishers, home-front civilians – all wrote ballad verse and lyrical poetry during the conflict. Tracing these authors is not easy. Indeed, songsheets often provided more detail about publishers, dedications and the performance of these songs rather than biographical information about their penmanship. Lyricists such as F. Collins, M. Fay, Michael O'Riely, Hugh F. McDermott and Kate C.M., to name a few mentioned in this study, are unknown figures.<sup>4</sup> Where possible, as much biographical information about each songwriter is

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<sup>3</sup> A detailed list of the Irish American Civil War songs analysed for this study can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> This analysis is drawn from conversations with American Civil War culture historian Christian McWhirter, who has aided private discussion about the issue of tracing wartime songwriters. One factor that demonstrates the complexity of having a lack of biographical information relates to women writers. Some male lyricists adopted female personas in order for songs to gain wider receivership. In addition, some songwriters wrote under pseudonyms, which adds difficulties in tracing authorship. As this study focuses on the sentiments and culture of Irish American Civil War songs and music specifically, unclear authorship is not a

given, taken from details provided on sources. In addition, not all songs were composed by Irish-born writers. Like the ballads themselves, Irish American Civil War songwriters were not exclusively Irish.

Moreover, the majority of songs in this study come from American publishers but some Irish-produced ballads also appear for contrast and comparison, and to highlight how these wartime songs spread through a network of transnational dissemination between America and Ireland and vice versa, and through the United States itself. The older tradition of Celtic and Gaelic oral bardic ballad culture – whereby information and memory was presented through song and speech more than writing – is evident in these mid-nineteenth century examples. Print culture certainly captures specific sentiments. While an argument can be made that these ballads present a false memory and specific interpretation of Irish American Civil War experiences, the fact remains that these sentiments are in need of analysis because they provide a comparative and counter view to other contemporary expressions and historical interpretations that add to scholarship on the Irish contribution to, and understanding of, the conflict. Through their wartime ballads, the Irish in America demonstrated articulations of their identity, loyalty and readiness to fight.

### **1.1 The American Civil War Irish in Irish American Historiography**

Modern scholarship on the Irish migrant diaspora in America has its foundations in Thomas Brown's *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890*, which focused on the immigrant experience in the two decades between 1870 and 1890.<sup>5</sup> This temporal concentration

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concern – the fact that the songs were written, published and spread sentiments about the Irish wartime experience is the main focus.

<sup>5</sup> See Thomas N. Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1966). Carl Wittke's work on the Irish in America was published a decade before Brown but the latter had a greater impact on subsequent Irish American historical scholarship. See Carl Wittke, *The Irish in America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956).

is beyond the Civil War period of course, but Brown's arguments about how the Irish experienced alienation and poverty in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century have pervaded impressions given about the diaspora in subsequent scholarship. According to J.J. Lee, since the work's publication in 1966, 'Brown's influence would permeate the thinking of an entire generation'.<sup>6</sup> In the last thirty years, studies began greater in-depth exploration of a longer period of nineteenth century Irish migrant history, led by Kerby Miller's prominent 1985 work *Emigrants and Exiles*.<sup>7</sup> Miller's driving thesis centres on the idea Irish migrants to the United States were exiles from Ireland and thought of themselves in that way through their experience from the 1600s to the 1920s. This sentiment was certainly present in nineteenth century balladry but was heard infrequently during the Civil War years. Songs that spread around the country during the conflict did not project the image of a lamenting Irish man or woman longing for Ireland. Wartime issues and fighting service took lyrical focus.

Miller placed the Irish who lived through the American Civil War within a post-Famine generation network. By comparison Kevin Kenny, who has followed in Brown and Miller's footsteps as one of the most influential scholars on wider Irish American diaspora experience, placed them inside the Famine generation umbrella in his compendium *The American Irish* in 2000.<sup>8</sup> He divided his study into pre-Famine, Famine and post-Famine generations. The pre-Famine generation, as defined by

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<sup>6</sup> J.J. Lee, "Introduction: Interpreting Irish America", in *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, eds. J.J. Lee and Marion R. Casey (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 10.

<sup>7</sup> See Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> See Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (Harlow: Longman, 2000); Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study", *The Journal of American History*, 90:1 (2003), 134-162. Although written a decade ago, Kenny's 2009 reappraisal of Irish American scholarship is a solid assessment of recent Irish diaspora and transnational studies developments, see Kevin Kenny, "Twenty Years of Irish American Historiography", *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 28:4 (2009), 67-75.

Kenny, encompassed all those who migrated to America in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, taking in several waves of settlement by multiple generations. This included both Protestant and Catholic Irish settlement across the country and across numerous states, building on mostly Protestant migration from the seventeenth and early eighteenth century who settled, assimilated and became American by the time the main nineteenth century waves of migrants arrived. Within this pre-Famine generation were also Ulster-Scots who settled in the Appalachian and Mid-Atlantic states, who likewise assimilated (to an extent) into American society by the American Civil War era. This generation, encompassing several generations of those born in America, also influenced the earliest dissemination and production of Irish musical culture in the country, as will be discussed in Chapter 2. The post-Famine generation encompassed those already settled in the United States from the 1870s onwards, and expanded to account for post-Civil War migrations through to the end of the nineteenth century. Like their pre-Famine counterparts, these generations spread across the country, going further in the Western states beyond Chicago and away from the Eastern seaboard.

It is Kenny's Famine generation period that is of most interest to the Irish American Civil War experience. This migrant period, ranging from the 1840s to the early 1870s in the thirty years during and after the Great Famine's impact on Ireland, included the approximately one and a half million Irish immigrants and their families who came across the Atlantic and resided in the country by the outbreak of the conflict in the 1860s. Using Miller and Kenny's frameworks, the Irish American Civil War generations can thus be situated between Famine and post-Famine history. That has had an impact on how those who fought in the Civil War have been considered in relation to wider diaspora experiences in the United States. This influx of Irish

immigrants brought about one of the largest extensions of the Catholic Irish diaspora in the United States, and the expansion of migrant communities in urban enclaves including New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, and southwards in New Orleans and Atlanta. Many of these were the ‘first-born’ generation – those born in Ireland and who later lived and fought in their new home country.

Most of the experiences addressed in this study, the figures who wrote and appeared in songs, who led Irish American Union and Confederate Army units, and who recorded their wartime incidents, were born in Ireland and were part of the Famine generation described by Kenny. Yet, songs were written, sung to and disseminated by members of the broader diaspora who encompassed other generations, especially those of second and third generations born in America with either one or both Irish-born parents, and Irish grandparents. In some cases, such as the examples of the chaplain William Corby or soldier Peter Welsh, whose wartime views appear in context to the sentiments heard in Irish wartime balladry, second-generation voices appear. Both demonstrated simultaneous strong connections to their Irish heritage and association to their American birthplace. Recovering the experience of second and subsequent generation Irish American Civil War soldiers and their families is harder than those of the first-born generation, mostly due to how they are not so readily recorded in studies, leading to more of a reliance on more individual experiences and memoirs.<sup>9</sup> However, born and descended generations’ standpoints are

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<sup>9</sup> This is also a reason why the figure of 200,000 Irish who fought in the Civil War only includes those born in Ireland, as their service records note their birthplace. The overall figure of those who could claim Irish ethnicity through subsequent descended generations, taking in all those who were the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren of pre-Famine migrants and beyond, would make the total number of ethnic-Irish (born and descended) American Civil War soldiers and sailors even higher. No nineteenth century Irish American scholar has suggested what this figure could likely be to date, as current studies by Damian Shiels and James Zibro are still trying to determine Irish-born soldiers in non-Irish dominant regiments and just how widespread second and subsequent generation enlistment may have been during the war. Both Shiels and David Gleeson have suggested using surnames as evidence of

important to wider Irish American Civil War history, especially in relation to cultural outputs as it through these that multi-generational influence and adoption of particular ideals, reasons for fighting and expressions of national pride, be that Irish or America. This has implications for understanding the main sentiments in wartime Irish ballads.

For example, lyrical expression about Irish loyalty to America is best understood in the context of the fact that many Famine migrants resided in the country for a good decade before the outbreak of the Civil War. The main Irish Famine migrations of 1845-1852 brought with it more than one age range of generations. While migrants may have been born in Ireland, grandparents, parents and children form their own generational subgroups within the ‘Irish-born’ framework. For instance, many of the soldiers who fought in the war migrated as children and young adults. Thus they grew up in the United States – albeit in Irish community settings – with the notions of the nation instilled in the cultural climate in which they lived. Their sentiments chime with those heard by descended generations who were born, lived in and were already in the United States by the time of the war. Thus this study takes a multi-generational and inter-generational approach, taking into account the sentiments and culture of the Irish diaspora from more than one band of migrant experience.

The field of Irish American history, and especially Irish American Civil War studies, needs greater differentiation when it comes to discussing generational differences, particularly in relation to the immigrant, ‘Irish-born’ population; in other words those born in Ireland, or first-generation migrants. Acknowledging that this

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tracing these generations, although as the majority of Civil War service records are still unsearchable (with the focus on those pertaining to soldiers who died in battle being conducted first) it will be some time before a more accurate figure is obtained. In the meantime, first-born generations will likely be the focus in studies of the diaspora during this period due to archival record accessibility.



group comprised different age generations helps to explain how and why Irish communities sought to maintain and facilitate a cultural heritage identity. This was something Irish American Civil War songs demonstrated. It also highlights a problem with the way Irish American studies have categorised migrant generations. Aside from the fact numerous state, regional, sectional, regimental, military and civilian differences shaped the Irish American Civil War experience, recent research has to contend with a solidified approach to mid-nineteenth century Irish experiences in America. Yet, as Marjorie R. Fallows stated, Irish American historiography has repeatedly ignored the fact that ‘not all Irishmen [and women] had the same experience’ of the United States.<sup>10</sup>

In Kenny’s work, the diaspora were an ‘established community’, implying a sense of Irish American cohesion.<sup>11</sup> This is indicative of a tendency among Irish American studies scholars to view the Irish in the nineteenth century United States of America as an homogenous collective. As David Fitzpatrick has argued, ‘historians more readily ascribe homogeneity to an experience involving millions of people rather than dozens or hundreds’. This is because ‘the sheer scale of Irish emigration...discourages one from standing back in order to appreciate its complexity and diversity’.<sup>12</sup> One overall homogenous narrative creates macro-level study, which has been the norm for Irish American scholarship until the last decade. Newer studies continue to fall into broader political, social and cultural generalities about the whole migrant community, even during the Civil War era, because it leads to broader conclusions. This is especially true of the growing body of American Civil War

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<sup>10</sup> Marjorie R. Fallows, *Irish Americans: Identity and Assimilation* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), 42.

<sup>11</sup> Kenny, *American Irish*, 138.

<sup>12</sup> David Fitzpatrick, “Irish Emigration in the Later Nineteenth Century”, *Irish Historical Studies*, 22:86 (1980), 137.

transnational studies where the conflict is placed within a global history context, such as Amanda Foreman's *A World on Fire* and Don Doyle's *The Cause of All Nations*. Both studies include the Irish experience but put it in comparison with other nationalities' wartime views.<sup>13</sup>

One fundamental problem compounds an homogenised Irish American narrative: there is no scholarly consensus on what constitutes an 'Irish American' in the diaspora's migrant experience. As Linda Dowling Almeida questioned: 'immigrant studies are fraught with the tension of identity: are they Irish or are they American?'<sup>14</sup> Discrepancy exists in the simultaneous use of 'Irish American' and the hyphenated 'Irish-American' phrases. Both imply a joint identity wherein immigrants hold Irish, American and Irish American ethnic associations. This adds to the impression of one community with a lack of distinction between first generation migrants born in Ireland and those of Irish descent comprising of second, third and subsequent generation American Irish residents.

While ongoing research into calculating the Irish-born population who fought in the American Civil War has lately risen from approximately 180,000 total to 200,000 soldiers – of which 180,000 were to be found in Union service and 20,000 in Confederate forces – there is still no agreement over whether to include those of Irish descent in the fighting figures despite the fact they were part of the diaspora, claimed Irish heritage and were often considered Irish by wider American society. Certainly, songs did not make any generational or diaspora descent generalisation. Even though her arguments about the Irish in America date from the earliest reassessment of Irish

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<sup>13</sup> See Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: An Epic History of Two Nations Divided* (London: Penguin, 2011); Don H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Linda Dowling Almeida, *Irish Immigrants in New York City, 1945-1995* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 21.

American scholarship thirty years ago, Fallows was correct to stress the importance of considering ‘the second and third generational Irish who also served’. Their inclusion in the fighting figures reveals how ‘the Irish contribution actually went beyond their proportion in the population’.<sup>15</sup>

Lack of a workable ‘Irish American’ definition has led to difficulties in Christian Samito’s argument put forward in his 2009 study. He assesses the Civil War’s impact on Irish and African American understanding of their nationalities and citizenship. He suggests that in the case of the Irish, migrants *became* American through their war service and experiences as citizens, mostly in the Union. In Samito’s view, ‘many Irish Americans increasingly came to recognize during the Civil War an American identity in addition to an Irish one’, caused by undefined ‘shifts in Irish American identity that took place during the Civil War’.<sup>16</sup> Yet, throughout his work Samito refers to the diaspora as ‘Irish Americans’. He thus gives them a separate national identity that implied they had already become Americans before the war. To fit Samito’s argument into Dowling Almeida’s stance would mean the diaspora did not value their ethnicity to a great extent if they were *becoming* Americans through the war. While much of Samito’s work is useful for contextualizing Irish wartime displays of American Union loyalty, the confused position on what constitutes an Irish American and how the diaspora could become and then be Irish, Irish American and American simultaneously is indicative of the lack of clarity about identity since the first detailed Irish American scholarship emerged. Exploration of the lyrical sentiments heard in Civil War ballads will

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<sup>15</sup> Fallows, *Irish Americans*, 38.

<sup>16</sup> Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 103-104. Samito focuses on the 1860s, but the Irish served in previous military engagements, including the War of Independence and Mexican-American War. Civil War songs barely discussed this part of Irish foreign military history in the United States.

demonstrate that the Irish articulated a strong association and connection to the ideals of their American homeland by the 1860s, and were identifying with being American through balladry.

In addition, the Irish-born centred view that stands for all of the diaspora has tended to focus on specific religious and regional migrant experiences. This is in part to do with the fact that Irish Protestants assimilated into American society across the country over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Irish experience and songs discussed in this study applies to examples of both Catholic and Protestant Irish-born and descended soldiers and their families. Religious affiliation was not a lyrical concern during the war.<sup>17</sup> By extension, there has been a continued mostly one-regional historical focus on the New York Irish migrant experience. Although problematic, it is understandable as the city was home to the highest proportion of Irish Catholic immigrants in the nineteenth century. The history of the Irish in New York City also dominates the source and archival evidence. Even during the American Civil War, including in the songs throughout this study, the New York Irish were the foundation of mid-nineteenth century Irish American society and culture. However, the New York experience was itself multifaceted. Almeida has observed that ‘the Irish community in New York has always been a complex and diverse one’, stressing that even this focal point is itself not homogenised.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Susannah Ural has focused especially on Irish Catholic Union Army volunteers, as evidence in her work *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006). The topic of religion and religious affiliation is silent in Civil War songs and is not a sentiment under discussion in this study. While many Irish soldiers were Catholic, especially in the Union Army’s Irish Brigade, no explicit or direct reference to their religion was heard in wartime balladry.

<sup>18</sup> Almeida, *Irish Immigrants in New York City*, 5. For further studies on the New York Irish experience in the Civil War era see Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World’s Most Notorious Slum* (New York: The Free Press, 2001); Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Mary

Despite efforts to move away from a New York Irish-centric study in this work, wartime song dedications and lyrics about the role of the Union Army's Irish Brigade and its New York components are inescapable. Songs about other Irish units like the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut, 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, and some Confederate units with Irish-born and descended soldiers serving in their ranks, do appear in this study. Yet, the overwhelming focus remains on the Irish Brigade's New York martial elements. Not only does this follow observations about how intransigent the New York Irish narrative is, and the considerable size and dominance of the Irish in New York during this period, but it also reflects a wider cultural observation that needs to be factored into Irish American Civil War studies. The Irish Brigade, in their cultural song manifestations, stood as representatives for the whole diaspora. Lyrics about them could be applied to any Irish-born and descended soldier's experience. Therefore, while a song on the surface was singing about this one narrative, it could be interpreted and adapted to any group of Irish-born and descended soldiers and their families beyond New York.

Overall though, the majority of Irish American Civil War scholarship, a field that has grown over the last decade, has still ensured New York remains central even when discussing comparable communities across the country. For example, Susannah Ural's studies focus on the Irish Catholic volunteers who fought in the Union Army, although she also discusses home-front experiences, especially in New York City.<sup>19</sup> Ural's arguments also claim that the diaspora's support for the war ended within

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C. Kelly, *The Shamrock and the Lily: The New York Irish and the Creation of a Transatlantic Identity, 1845-1921* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> See Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*; Susannah J. Ural, "'Remember Your Country and Keep Up Its Credit': Irish Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865", *The Journal of Military History*, 69:2 (2005), 331-359; Susannah J. Ural, "'Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble': Northern Irish American Catholics and the Union War Effort, 1861-1865, *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah J. Ural (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

eighteen months of the conflict starting; by 1863 high casualty figures, emancipation and army draft policies led to widespread community disillusionment. Certainly, the Emancipation Proclamation that freed slaves in the rebellious Confederate States on 1 January 1863 provoked aggravated reactions from sections of the home-front. Its policies, along with the introduction of the Union Army draft soon after, exacerbated tensions in some enclaves of the northern states diaspora. Both contributed to what Ural has described as the growing ‘animosity between Irish Catholic frustration and disillusionment with the Lincoln administration’.<sup>20</sup> Therefore it appears a division was created between views about Irish war service in the first years of conflict in 1861 and 1862, and the latter years of the war in 1863 to 1865. The peak of this separation in attitudes came in 1863, particularly around the summer and two years into the fighting when wartime policies began to take their toll on home-front attitudes. As will be shown, cultural outputs, especially songs by and about the Irish in Civil War America, challenge many of Ural’s standpoints about the Irish experience of the conflict and their overall views of wartime actions.

By comparison, David Gleeson’s work on the Irish who fought and lived in the Confederacy offers a more nuanced argument about an admittedly smaller number of inhabitants and fighters. Indeed, along with Samito and Ural, Gleeson has paved the way for more detailed scholarship and analysis that explores regional and specific aspects of the Irish American Civil War experience. He places the Irish in the southern states in context with Confederate nationalism and loyalty to the secessionist cause.<sup>21</sup> Gleeson has pointed out that the overall military contribution by Irish-born

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<sup>20</sup> Ural, ‘Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble’, 115.

<sup>21</sup> See David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); David T. Gleeson, “‘To Live and Die [For] Dixie’: Irish Civilians and the Confederate States of America”, *Irish Studies Review*, 18:2 (2010), 139-153; David T. Gleeson and Brendan J. Buttimer, “‘We Are

and descended soldiers to the Confederate Army was relatively minimal. This extends to Irish Confederate ballad output. The Confederacy produced significantly fewer songs during the conflict. Only a handful of ballads exist in records about the approximately 20,000 Irish-born and subsequent descended soldiers who fought for the seceded southern states. Detailed assessment of Confederate songbooks researched for this study barely make reference to Irish fighting service, a stark difference to their prevalence in Union examples. Instead of leaving these out altogether, Irish Confederate American Civil War songs will be analysed throughout this study when they provide comparative examples. On some sentiments, namely national identity and fighting service, they are less overt. Thus it is impossible to apply the same conclusion as Irish Union examples. Nonetheless, many Confederate songs' tunes owed their origins to both Irish and Scottish music. Therefore, the influence of Irish music shaping Confederate ballads through their adoption of traditional tunes will be explored.

Moreover, in an attempt to counter some previous assessments, the latest analysis of the Irish in the American Civil War by Ryan Keating has drawn focus away from the more all-encompassing diaspora experience and New York-specific broader studies. In his 2017 work on Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting in other Union Army regiments, Keating attempted to re-balance attention away from the dominant narrative about the Irish Brigade and its composite regiments. Taking issue with the fact that 'the Irish Brigade has assumed an unmatched place within the memory of Irish service in the Civil War', Keating is right to address the fact that 'Irish American service was...much more complex than is widely realized'. The Irish

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Irish Everywhere': Irish Immigrant Networks in Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia", *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, 23:2-3 (2005), 183-205.

Brigade of the eastern New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts diasporas did not represent the whole wartime experience. Instead, Keating's work details the service of three other Irish dominant regiments: the 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut, 23<sup>rd</sup> Illinois and 17<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. Nevertheless, these regiments are put into context in relation to the Irish Brigade throughout his study. This confirms the difficulty of moving away from their dominant wartime narrative. Although Keating argues 'there were similarities in experiences across the North', ultimately 'there is no simple narrative with which to describe ethnic service in the Civil War'.<sup>22</sup>

Keating's approach indicates where Irish American Civil War studies appears to be heading, focusing on more local and personal experiences, while acknowledging an homogenised view cannot fit all. He argues that in relation to wartime identity developments during the war, 'the creation of a multigenerational, distinctive group of hyphenated-American men and women' can be seen in the United States. He suggests members of the diaspora were able to profess 'both their American and their Irish identity when necessary'.<sup>23</sup> This presents the impression of a more fluid identity than Ural's view of the diaspora holding solid dual identity loyalties to Ireland and America. Moreover, Keating's work expands current studies outside academic scholarship that focus on Irish American Civil War military service and history. This work demonstrates a strong sense of American identity. For example, research by Damian Shiels, who has helped bring Irish American Civil War stories to public audiences away from the realm of Civil War military studies through his work on wartime pension files, shares much of Keating's focus.<sup>24</sup> From the soldiers' perspective, it is possible to see American identity articulations coming to the fore,

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<sup>22</sup> Ryan Keating, *Shades of Green: Irish Regiments, American Soldiers and Local Communities in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 2; 12; 14.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>24</sup> See Damian Shiels, *Irish in the American Civil War*, <http://irishamericancivilwar.com>.



with implications about how this relates to the diaspora home-front narrative explored by Ural.

Studies by Gleeson, Keating and Shiels have revealed regional, local and personal stories of Irish American Civil War era experiences. They reflect the way recent Irish transnational studies have shifted focus from grand diaspora narratives towards recounting more micro-historical accounts and have helped expand the richness of Irish American transnational studies, while also complicating overall conclusions. Where Irish American Civil War songs fit within this approach regarding the diaspora's cultural expressions creates further issues because they were both simultaneously American outputs that sang of an American identity, while retaining a sense of Irish cultural heritage. Contrary to Kenny's view that there was 'a single, complex and diverse Irish culture that existed simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean' in the nineteenth century, Irish American Civil War songs and music were far broader and adaptable within Irish migrant communities and American society alike.<sup>25</sup> Irish culture adopted American traits and identities that were enhanced by the conflict.

With so many studies and approaches to the Irish in America experience, let alone growing approaches to the Irish American Civil War experience, attempting to create one interpretation and narrative is impossible as new primary evidence research raises challenges to established interpretations. Kenny noted for all 'the existing literature' in the last decade, there is 'surprisingly little about how the Irish thought and felt about themselves'.<sup>26</sup> Recent studies in the last ten years are revealing voices from more Irish-born and descended soldiers and their families during the American Civil War. One area that has yet to be fully explored are the sentiments that were

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<sup>25</sup> Kenny, *American Irish*, 172.

<sup>26</sup> Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison", 155; 160.

expressed and heard in ballads about the Irish wartime experience. Even within this history of music and musicology, the voice of Irish American Civil War songs have remained relatively muted.

## **1.2 Irish Songs and Music in American Culture and Musicology Studies**

In the last twenty years, cultural history and studies approaches in American Civil War scholarship have attempted to convey the importance of music and songs. The study of American Civil War music and song has, for the most part, been kept within the field of musicology and history of music studies. This cultural aspect of the conflict has not received in-depth exploration, and the Irish influence on wartime music and song culture even less so. Alfred M. Williams laid the initial foundations of Civil War ballad studies at the end of the nineteenth century with an overview study of wartime folk songs, which included brief reference to ethnic groups' contributions to the overall scope of song writing production. He noted that even thirty years on from the conflict, the 'immense amount of...uncollected and unedited verse' needed historical exploration. Songs produced from 1861 to 1865 relating to the conflict had scholarly value and provided another source of wartime opinions to understand.

This study advocates that argument. Williams believed ballads illustrated 'the sentiments and condition of the people, the waves of popular feeling during the various phases of the war, the impressions of notable incidents and the estimates of prominent personage'. These themes are apparent throughout Irish examples. Williams also noted that unlike other Civil War print culture, songs written quickly in the aftermath of events presented particular expressions which were 'oftentimes more' revealing about contemporary Union and Confederate society 'than the leading articles in the newspapers'. They reflected and sung about 'how the common people

were affected by the tremendous struggle'.<sup>27</sup>

Compendiums such as Steven H. Cornelius's *Music of the Civil War Era* and the recent work done by Christian McWhirter on the main themes and types of American Civil War music have contextualised American Civil War music and song studies.<sup>28</sup> However, within this focus the specific role and contribution of Irish wartime balladry has been limited. Both built on earlier attempts to gather together and analyse, to some extent, certain areas of American Civil War musicology. This process was started by Willard A. Heaps and Porter W. Heaps in their 1960 work *The Singing Sixties*, which presented an overview of the broad themes of general American Civil War songs.<sup>29</sup> Likewise E. Lawrence Abel attempted a similar framework in *Singing the New Nation*, which assessed how music and song was part of an effort to create a sense of Confederate nationalism.<sup>30</sup> If anything, this scholarship has demonstrated the fact that since Williams wrote his initial Civil War song study, focus has shifted onto the musical meanings behind the conflict's ballads. Studies have looked at the importance and role songs and music played during the conflict instead of presenting specific analysis of song lyrics and close reading of lyrical expressions.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Alfred M. Williams, "Folk-Songs of the Civil War", *The Journal of American Folklore*, 5:19 (1892), 267.

<sup>28</sup> See Steven H. Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004); Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Christian McWhirter, "Music", in *A Companion to the U.S. Civil War*, ed. Aaron Sheehan-Dean (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 1003-1020.

<sup>29</sup> See Willard A. Heaps and Porter W. Heaps, *The Singing Sixties: The Spirit of Civil War Days Drawn from the Music of the Times* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960).

<sup>30</sup> See E. Lawrence Abel, *Singing the New Nation: How Music Shaped the Confederacy, 1861-1865* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> The last decade has also seen the appearance of studies about specific American ballads, including John Stauffer and Benjamin Soskis's *The Battle Hymn of the Republic: A Biography of the Song that Marches On* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) about *John Brown's Body* and *Battle Hymn of the Republic* before, during and after the American Civil War. For non-Civil War examples see Sheryl Kaskowitz, *God Bless America: The*

Following Alfred M. Williams, James H. Stone offered a meaningful attempt to assess the psychological impact music had on American Civil War soldiers' experience. He observed the fact that music and song were an intrinsic part of military lives. It was engrained in the everyday lived experience of the war. The United States was extremely musically literate in the nineteenth century. The practice and habit of singing and performing around campfires, in intimate settings, in music halls, at military concerts and in home-front parlours was so common place that it often went unrecorded in contemporary accounts, letters, reports or later postbellum memoirs. This lack of reference to everyday song and musical culture demonstrates how integral such practices were to society; so unremarkable was it that comment was not necessary. Only specific moments of song singing, lyric writing and musical performance survive in records, especially in relation to Irish American Civil War songs and music. Stone argued that 'it is unnecessary to attempt to list the traditional songs which formed a part of the soldier's musical life, for they may be taken for granted'. Traditional songs that came from older cultures, particularly Irish and Scottish, and contemporary wartime productions 'came so naturally to the soldier's lips that he mentions them specifically on too few occasions for their titles to be compiled statistically'.<sup>32</sup>

The estimated 11,000 songs produced during the American Civil War are drawn from records largely left by publishing houses and production copyright offices held by libraries and private collections. The written and printed record of songsheets and songsters is all that now remains, but it must be noted that music and song were

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*Surprising History of an Iconic Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, The Untold Story of an American Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> James H. Stone, "War Music and War Psychology in the Civil War, *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 36:4 (1941), 556.

forever adapting and being re-written during the conflict in both the Union and Confederacy. Many more oral and written records of wartime singing culture no longer survive. This has led to the most recent trend in scholarship that ascribes meaning to wartime music and song culture, especially of the soldiers themselves. As McWhirter has stressed, ‘music was a major rallying point for the soldiers. The songs they heard and performed’, as well as wrote, did ‘everything from boosting morale to shaping political opinions’. Enhancing Stone’s argument, McWhirter states song and ‘music became intrinsically linked to the soldiers’ Civil War experiences’.<sup>33</sup>

James A. Davis has observed this in his detailed case study about the role of music during Union and Confederate Virginian winter encampments of 1863-1864. There, the playing and performing of ballads and tunes were an innate part of the ‘social experience’ as ‘performers and listeners actively participated in bringing music to life and granting it meaning’. Although the sentiments sometimes differed, there was no sectional difference when it came to the general wartime practice of singing. Union and Confederate camps reflected contemporary American musical practice. ‘Ultimately the music heard around the firesides and in the tents was neither Northern nor Southern; it spoke to, and of, all soldiers’, Davis observes, again reiterating the point that lyrical expressions were not the main focus. It was the very habit of song singing and music playing that mattered as it ‘permeated every Civil War camp and directly impacted every enlisted man, officer, and nearby civilian’.<sup>34</sup>

Davis’s overall argument that ‘the importance of music for the troops cannot be overestimated, especially given the vast quantity (of a surprisingly wide variety)

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<sup>33</sup> McWhirter, *Battle Hymns*, 112.

<sup>34</sup> James A. Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan: Civil War Soldiers, Music and Community During Winter Quarters, Virginia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 14; 73; 42.

that was consumed’ also echoes a view heard within wartime music culture itself.<sup>35</sup> In the preface of the 1862 Confederate songster *War Songs of the South*, the editor wrote a rare account about song production, explaining why the songbook contained the ballads it did:

Many of the songs have been composed by soldiers in camp, and nearly all have particular reference to some event of the war, some battle, or individual act of heroism...They possess all the vitality and force of the testimony of eye-witnesses to a glorious combat, or even of actors in it.<sup>36</sup>

This explanatory note supports arguments in recent American Civil War song and music studies about the power songs had over shaping wartime lyrical culture and sentiments. All ‘patriotic songs, songs related to soldiering, songs about home, novelty or humorous songs, and more’ connected to front-line experience to one extent or another as Davis has noted.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, soldiering songs were one of the main types and lyrical forms of Civil War music.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, McWhirter has observed that soldiers’ wartime song output had immense cultural power in shaping understanding of the conflict, a factor that has yet to be appreciated in wider American Civil War studies. Songs written ‘for a civilian audience fostered ‘cultural connections with the home-front’ when they were published and performed at music halls. They would also enhance the sense of military community identity and fighting spirit felt by those who served. While some regiments only had marching tunes played by bands and occasional ‘pieces [that] had no lyrics’, others penned their own regimental ballads. Indeed, ‘many units had had

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>36</sup> “Preface”, *War Songs of the South* (Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1862), 4.

<sup>37</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 58.

<sup>38</sup> David Cockrell, “Nineteenth Century Popular Music”, in *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. David Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 181-182.

their own songs. Most of these pieces had some connection with an event from the history of the regiment'.<sup>39</sup> Irish units, regiments and brigades in both the Union and Confederacy armies engaged particularly in this cultural production practice.

However, in all these scholarly approaches, the role and sentiments of Irish American Civil War songs and music has only been touched upon briefly, if at all. McWhirter's *Battle Hymns* discusses Irish contributions to American wartime culture in a handful of pages. Davis has noted 'the ethnic identity of particular regiments (especially Irish and German) was celebrated through their musical choices' and that the 'cultural gaps' between Irish, German and American 'music tended to diminish, not amplify' during the war. Whilst true, the argument forgets the fact that the former had shaped much of American musical and song tradition by the 1860s. Davis is also right to observe that 'music had the ability to bring together disparate individuals into communal groups centred on specific repertoires'.<sup>40</sup> Yet, he does not take the argument further in relation to the role and meaning behind the significant output of Irish American Civil War songs between 1861 and 1865 and their relationship to articulating wartime sentiments and American identities.

Therefore, Irish wartime songs have received little analysis. Robert L. Wright's significant collection *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, published in 1975, included many of the songs that appear in this study, but scholars have used very few as evidence of the diaspora's experience and sentiments during the conflict. In addition, Wright himself merely published the ballads with no discussion of their lyrical sentiments.<sup>41</sup> In J.J. Lee and Marion R. Casey's large edited collection *Making the Irish American*, discussion of Irish American musical heritage is included in

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<sup>39</sup> McWhirter, *Battle Hymns*, 125-126.

<sup>40</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 52.

<sup>41</sup> See Robert L. Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1975). Some ballads quoted in this study use Wright's source evidence.

chapters on Irish popular and traditional music in the United States. Nonetheless, these studies by Mick Moloney and Rebecca S. Miller respectively do not focus on the 1860s to any great extent.<sup>42</sup> This is in keeping with Moloney's own archive holding at New York University where many Irish American ballad records date from the postbellum period and twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> Likewise William H.A. Williams only skims the surface of Irish American Civil War ballad lyrics in his wide-ranging study on 'the image of Ireland and the Irish' in American song from 1800 to the early 1900s. His focus was on popular reproductions and musical hall entertainment instead of soldiers' output.<sup>44</sup>

Even in Bruce C. Kelley and Mark A. Snell's recent edited collection *Bugle Resounding*, which highlights the musicians and music of the war instead of actual song lyrics, Michael Saffle's chapter on Irish American music in the period is limited in its scope. Some attempt is made to determine what made a song and music 'Irish' in the Civil War, as Saffle argues:

There is no uniquely 'Irish' effect, just as there is nothing unmistakably 'Irish' in a great many Irish American dances, marches, and parlor songs. Nevertheless, 'Irishness' often seems to be present in Irish American music. Occasionally this is linked with high spirits, as in jigs and reels.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Mick Moloney, "Irish-American Popular Music", *Making the Irish American*, eds. Lee and Casey, 381-405; Rebecca S. Miller, "Irish Traditional Music in the United States", *Making the Irish American*, eds. Lee and Casey, 411-416.

<sup>43</sup> The Mick Moloney Irish-American Music and Popular Culture Irish Americana Collection, The Tamimnet Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.

<sup>44</sup> See William H.A. Williams, *'Twas Only An Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

<sup>45</sup> Michael Saffle, "Across a Great Divide: Irish American Music and Musicians of the Civil War Era", in *Bugle Resounding: Musicians and Music of the Civil War Era*, eds. Bruce C. Kelley and Mark A. Snell (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 186.



Saffle's focus was mostly on the general wider Irish American Civil War musical culture and discussion of Irish musicians like Irish-born bandmaster Patrick Gilmore, not the song-writing element or the lyrical sentiments of songs themselves. It also relied heavily on analysis from William L. Burton's *Melting Pot Soldiers*, which centred on the experience of the Union Army's ethnic regiments, including the Irish.<sup>46</sup>

William H.A. Williams, by comparison, offered an eight-point methodological framework for what qualified 'an "Irish song"'. It had to have 'at least two of the following criteria' relating to the title, reference to Ireland, appearance of Irish or Irish-descended persons, Irish lyrics, Irish performers, Irish melodies, Irish illustrations on songsheets, or 'became accepted by Irish Americans as part of their culture'.<sup>47</sup> This study uses Williams' framework, adopting all of its eight points. It also expands this framework by including all songs that were written by, about, or related to the Irish experience of the American Civil War, including more general wartime songs where the Irish in America were mentioned.

Both scholarship of the Irish in the war and their wartime songs has thus, to date, taken assessment to a point. Lack of in-depth close analysis is mostly a result of archive accessibility and disciplinary constraints. By combining Irish American, Civil War, material and musical culture strands, this study will demonstrate how the use and study of Irish American wartime ballads and songs, and some of the music their lyrics were set to, widen exploration of the diaspora's experiences and sentiments regarding fighting and living through the tumultuous 1860s. As Georges-Denis

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<sup>46</sup> William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union Ethnic Regiments* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).

<sup>47</sup> Williams, *'Twas Only An Irishman's Dream*, 9.

Zimmerman noted in his study of Irish political street ballads, ‘a song is more than a text and a melody which can be recorded or printed, examined and criticised’.<sup>48</sup>

Certainly, the lack of song sources in Irish American Civil War scholarship complicates some of the arguments put forward in historiographical studies. For instance, Ural’s dominant narrative centres on the impression that the Irish were disillusioned by the middle of the war. She argues that ‘in response’ to a culmination of factors and events, ‘native-born Americans stopped celebrating Irish military traditions, fighting abilities, and other examples of ethnic pride’. Nonetheless, songs about all these themes continued to be written, performed and heard throughout American society. Use of such sources would avoid contradictions in some of Ural’s arguments. She states that Irish immigrant ‘heritage shaped how [the diaspora] viewed the war and how they responded to it’.<sup>49</sup> Yet, part of that heritage was the culture of articulating views through broadside balladry. If anything, these songs support James McPherson’s claim about how established ‘the fighting reputation of the Irish Brigade in the Army of the Potomac’, along with other Irish-dominant regiments and martial units, was in wartime society.

Songs were the primary shapers of reporting and establishing their combative character. Such was the reputation, and the fact Irish-born and descended soldiers continued to enlist and serve throughout the war knowing what their brethren had done before, that, in McPherson’s opinion, this ‘should give one...pause’ for thought before assuming the Irish were co-opted, drafted and forced into service, and came to see the war in a negative light – a view that pervades Ural’s underlying arguments.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Georges-Denis Zimmerman, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs, 1780-1900* (Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1967), 12.

<sup>49</sup> Ural, “Northern Irish American Catholics and the Union War Effort”, 125; 127.

<sup>50</sup> James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9.

Extending Robert R. Grimes's thesis about Irish music and song in the antebellum United States, both the war and postbellum periods did not see 'a distinctive Irish-American musical culture develop' that drew on 'ideas and attitudes which formed this culture' in the years before the conflict.<sup>51</sup> Distinctive Irish American cultural heritage, which included extolling foreign military histories, existed since the turn of the nineteenth century.

The absence of song sources in historical studies fails to appreciate how critical these lyrical productions were in articulating attitudes right in the heart of the conflict. This goes beyond simply drawing meaning from the ballad words themselves. It relates to a greater appreciation of how intrinsic song singing and music was to broader culture and to personal lived experiences in the American Civil War. James A. Davis has expressed this sense of wartime musical and balladry importance in his arguments about how they provided emotional support to the soldiers, and by extension to home-front communities too. Those on both Union and Confederate sides 'relied on music for support...[and] grasped for whatever music they could find and drew from it the emotional sustenance needed to cope with the trauma that governed their lives' during the war. Music was thus 'important to the emotional stability of the men' and 'also helped them to relate to those around them and to provide structure to their tumultuous world'.<sup>52</sup> Lyrical sentiment and context sing of greater themes therefore must be added to understanding of Irish American Civil War history.

One critical development starting to shed new archival evidence and source analysis in Irish American Civil War studies, and in Irish transnational history studies

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<sup>51</sup> Robert R. Grimes, *How Shall We Sing In A Foreign Land? Music of Irish Catholic Immigrants in the Antebellum United States* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 176.

<sup>52</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 239; 250.

more broadly, is the advent of digitisation combined with ‘the material turn’ in cultural history. This has led to what Leonie Hannan and Sarah Longair have noted as the ‘substantial scholarship on the value of material objects for historical research’.<sup>53</sup> It has also allowed for a plethora of American Civil War print culture to become available during the conflict’s sesquicentennial. The digitisation of songster sheets, songbooks and musical score books with lyrics and musical notation has allowed for greater research access and printed ephemera source availability. Recent methodological arguments about print culture society and the power of material culture’s role in scholarship to ‘help the discipline of history...change, develop and ask new questions about the past’ can bridge the gap between source analysis and use of non-traditional print material. As Hannan and Longair argue, ‘material culture frames all of our actions and experiences and is constitutive of them’. The role of songs and their dissemination was part of American Union and Confederate ‘production and consumption of goods...power relations, social bonds and networks, gender interactions, identities, cultural affiliations and beliefs’.<sup>54</sup> Irish American Civil War examples are part of this framework and need to be analysed with these themes in mind.

Moreover, using this approach to focus on Irish American Civil War material culture and musicological aspects of wartime song writing, production and singing, correspond with arguments put forward by Benedict Anderson in relation to ‘the central importance of print-capitalism’ to disseminate and establish community articulations and expressions. This is a factor often missing in American Civil War song and music scholarship. While the Irish in the American Civil War era were not

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<sup>53</sup> Leonie Hannan and Sarah Longair, *History Through Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 6; 1.

imagining the construct of the American Union community, their wartime songs certainly support an argument about how the conflict articulated ‘the birth of the imagined community of the nation’, namely the nation of Irish America. Print culture’s ‘ephemeral popularity’ and print-capitalism marketplace, to which Irish American Civil War songs contributed to and expanded, meant that in 1860s the Irish were able ‘to think about themselves, and to related themselves to others, in profoundly new ways’.<sup>55</sup> This study will demonstrate how the diaspora did this through singing their wartime sentiments into American culture.

The increase in digitisation by libraries and archival holdings in the last decade especially, particularly in the field of American history and at American institutions, has been of great benefit to research on Civil War songs and to this project in particular. The Library of Congress has digitised much of its printed music and song archives; several university special collections, such as those belonging to Johns Hopkins and Duke University; and more specific institutions like the Ward Irish Music Archive in Wisconsin, have made transnational availability of printed song sheets attainable.<sup>56</sup> Along with archives in Ireland and Britain, the growing amount of available sources relating to American Civil War music and song production is opening up new avenues for interpretation. These factors help make future research into tracing the spread and publication of American Civil War ballads and music-making, including Irish songs, more extensive.

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<sup>55</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 18; 24; 34; 36. For exploration of print culture capitalism, song publishing and production intertextuality before the American Civil War see Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

<sup>56</sup> *American Song Sheets*, Duke University Libraries Digital Collections, <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/songsheets/>; The Lester S. Levy Music Sheet Collection, Special Collections John Hopkins University, <http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/>; *Irish Sheet Music Archives*: The Sheet Music Collections at the Ward Irish Music Archives, Wisconsin, <https://irishsheetmusicarchives.com/sheet-music.htm>.

Yet, for all the abundance of digital archives, particularly in relation material used in this study, questions need to be raised in relation to American Civil War material culture and where songsheet and songsters fit within the realm of wartime printed ephemera. Broadside ballad sheets in particular were not meant to survive. Recent assessment of historical scholarship's use and adoption of material culture studies has defined ephemera as 'things which were created to have a temporary or transient existence, intended by their makers originally to be discarded'.<sup>57</sup> Broadside and songsheets – single pieces of paper like posters and notices pasted on walls – were meant to have this short existence. Songsters, because they were books, are also in part material ephemera, but were likely to be kept because of their more durable quality. In between these two products were scrapbooks and private songster collections made up of individual songsheets. These books have been preserved and have their own archival survival story to tell. The fact that someone in postbellum years collated such collections is in itself a sentiment of importance, illustrating how Irish songs were disseminated and retained in American society and culture.

Therefore the 'societal value' of material culture – meaning 'the way objects are valued by the society in which they were made and by subsequent societies' that have preserved and studied them – provides a methodological framework for interpreting the American Civil War through non-traditional military narratives.<sup>58</sup> Hannan and Longair have also highlighted that 'the term "material culture" works well as it emphasises the idea that materiality is part of culture'. Understanding social aspects of a period 'cannot...be fully understood without attending to its material realities'. Irish American Civil War songs are a good source base to begin exploration

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<sup>57</sup> Hannan and Longair, *History Through Material Culture*, xiii.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

of Civil War material culture and ballads' importance in wartime society because they sing of sentiments and values that correspond and divert with established scholarship.

At the same time, this study's sources say much in between the lyrics about their identity, transmission and place in social culture that expands scholarly understanding of the diaspora and articulations of its experience in the middle of nineteenth century America. Whilst there is an element of truth to the view that 'to date, historians working on material culture have tended to emphasise the 'culture' over the 'material', studying wartime balladry sources points towards future research direction.<sup>59</sup> As historical scholarship begins to embrace more of the material culture aspects of cultural studies, particularly in subjects relating to conflict studies, it will ensure the forgotten voices of the Irish in the American Civil War era are returned to the forefront of scholarship and challenge interpretations in Irish American Civil War diaspora and transnational studies.

### **1.3 Themes and Structure Outline**

The first part of this thesis will focus on wider Irish American song and music dissemination by the time of the Civil War. Chapter 2 analyses Irish music and song influence in American culture up to the 1860s. Chapter 3 continues this assessment with specific reference to how Irish songs written during the Civil War itself circulated through society from the front-line to the home-front. The remainder of the thesis analyses the sentiments and main themes of Irish American Civil War songs. Chapter 4 explores the way songs were used to recount and spread stories of Irish-born and descended soldiers' war service and fighting experience, as well as creating lyrical heroes out of Irish-born officers such as Generals Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher. Chapter 5 will expand this theme in relation to the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 9.

diaspora's lyrical recollection of Irish foreign military service and expression of ethnic cultural heritage within America. Chapter 6 continues an Irish focus by discussing the appearance of Irish nationalist views and sympathies within American Civil War balladry, alongside the publication of contemporary songs supporting Irish Fenian aspirations for Ireland's eventual freedom from British rule. This chapter explores the way these sentiments combined both with wartime expressions and views about American support for Irish independence, and what song lyrics from the 1860s reveal about the state of Irish nationalism and nationalist identity in the United States.

Throughout this study, a division appears between the lyrical soldiering experience and home-front views of the conflict. Chapter 7 will expand on this aspect by discussing the way contemporary political opinions were sung about in Irish American wartime balladry. Some themes were not discussed to any great extent. For example, issues of about race, emancipation and army service drafts are relatively quiet. However, this chapter explores the fact that there was a different cultural reaction to the wartime politics of 1863 and 1864 than has been explored. Chapter 8 brings together the underlying theme running throughout the rest of this study in relation to identity expressions in Irish American Civil War songs, namely one that centres articulation on Americanness. This last chapter argues about an apparent American national identity sentiment that appears within cultural articulations and needs to be considered within broader Irish American transnational studies.

The Civil War and the songs that they wrote and published articulated this transition. They retained Irish cultural heritage aspects during the conflict, but these songs were sung with an American spirit. For ease, the terms 'Irish-born and descended', diaspora and 'Irish in America' will be used in this study instead of the descriptive 'Irish American'. This ensures clarity between what relates to a song



about the Irish in relation to more general wartime ballads, and avoids the confusion shown throughout studies about who was an Irish American. What is apparent in songs, however, is a pervasive sense of Irish American identity whereby the focus was placed on the American side first and foremost during the Civil War.

Finally, it should be noted briefly that the Irish were not the only ethnic group to sing of their American Civil War service. The Scottish dominated 79<sup>th</sup> New York ‘Highlanders’ Regiment adopted the 1861 ballad *War Song for the 79<sup>th</sup> Regiment*. It sang of the ‘Sons of Freedom’ who arose to fight the Confederacy. Set to the Scottish tune *Scot’s Wha Hae Wi’ Wallace Bled*, its lyrical focus about fighting ‘for Liberty and right’ applied to all Union Army units, including the Irish.<sup>60</sup> By comparison, German Americans penned many of their own ballads during the Civil War, such as *Our German Volunteers* (1862). Over five verses it detailed how ‘German volunteers’ of the 8<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry Regiment ‘fought well’.<sup>61</sup>

These Scottish and German examples raised the same dominant sentiments heard in the Irish American Civil War songs of this study: commitment to fight, serve and defend the American Union and the nation’s ideals of freedom and liberty against Confederate secession. One exemplary Irish American Civil War verse from 1861 in particular set the scene for the singing sentiments that were heard throughout the conflict:

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<sup>60</sup> *War Song for the 79<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

<sup>61</sup> *Our German Volunteers*, in *The Camp-Fire Songster: A Collection of Popular, Patriotic, National, Pathetic, and Jolly Songs, Suited for the Camp or March, Containing a Number of Songs Never Before Printed* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 31-32.

The war trump has sounded, our rights are in danger;  
Shall the brave sons of Erin be deaf to the call,  
When freedom demands of both native and stranger,  
Their aid, lest the greatest of nations should fall?  
Shall this banner so dear to the exile of the Gael,  
By traitor and rebels, in anarchy's school,  
Be trailed in the dust, disgraced in the vale,  
While our people, the sov'reign, in equity rule?<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *The Harp of Old Erin and Banner of Stars* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).



## **Chapter 2**

### **‘The Best Sentimental, Patriotic, Traditional and Humorous Songs and Melodies’: The Place of Irish Music and Songs in Nineteenth Century America**

Songs produced by and about the Irish American Civil War experience entered a cultural marketplace suffused with Irish tunes and ballads that sang of immigrant and diasporic sentiments and themes. The fundamental reason why there were so many specific Irish-related wartime ballads was because the genre of Irish music and song was already popular across the United States of America in the nineteenth century. Established Irish music and lyric themes circulated from the earliest migrations. They were part of a broader cultural foundation and production developed through the continual use and fusion of many different British, Irish and European balladry traditions predominately from the eighteenth century.

The growth of printing and press culture also helped establish a firm Irish music and song presence in the United States by the 1860s. This was in keeping with E.P. Thompson’s assertion that ‘oral tradition [was] supplemented by growing literacy’ that led to ‘widely circulated printed products’, including songsheets and broadsides.<sup>1</sup> Such practice cemented traditional folk lyrics and tunes in culture via the publication of printed materials that spread easily through society. They helped create one common cultural foundation on which musical variations and lyrical adaptations could be built on both sides of the Atlantic.

Most American Civil War songs and music can thus be traced to ballads and tunes produced decades, sometimes even centuries, before. This chapter will focus specifically on the musical tunes behind many Irish and more general American wartime song lyrics. The music itself presented sentiments that can be analysed.

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<sup>1</sup> E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993), 8.

Tunes carried meanings that emphasised the subject matter being sung about. For example, ballads dedicated to the Union Army's Irish Brigade used airs considered to be fundamentally American. This served to strengthen the lyrical message of American loyalty and identity affiliation. It also revealed the Americanisation of traditional Irish tunes such as *The Irish Jaunting Car*.

## 2.1 Thomas Moore and Early Irish Music and Song Dissemination

Transnational dissemination of Irish traditional music and song had occurred in the United States since the early 1700s, when 'ballad sheets and songbooks were being carried as goods from Ireland to America'.<sup>2</sup> This was alongside song and music transportation by immigrants and travellers through migrants' oral culture practices. By the early 1800s, it is possible to trace the emergence of surviving music and songs that shaped later cultural outputs heard on Civil War battlefields, in home-front parlours and at music halls. Printed distribution was reinforced by the publication of one particular influential Irish songbook: Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*.

Moore, the Dublin-born 'poet and historian', produced numerous writings and lyrical works in first half of the nineteenth century that became 'the text to Ireland's national music'.<sup>3</sup> His works inspired subsequent songwriters and composers of Irish balladry. As American music and history scholar Michael Broyles stated, through his work Moore 'established the vogue'.<sup>4</sup> The songs in *Irish Melodies*, along with accompanying musical settings drawn from older traditional folk airs and Moore's own compositions, 'influenced the composure of tunes that came after', especially in

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<sup>2</sup> Hugh Shields, *Narrative Singing in Ireland: Lays, Ballads, Come-All-Yes and Other Songs* (Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 52.

<sup>3</sup> James Quinn, *Young Ireland and the Writing of Irish History* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2015), 190.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Broyles, 'Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics in the Nineteenth Century', *The Cambridge History of American Music*, ed. David Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 138.

America.<sup>5</sup> The dissemination and ‘early importation of Thomas Moore’s ballads’ effectively established the Irish music and song genre as a transnational product. They had a ‘major impact on popular song’ for much of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Moore’s first published *Irish Melodies* volume appeared in the United States in 1808, a year after its publication in Ireland. The collection’s main print ran to 1837 with several adaptations totalling ten volumes and one hundred and twenty four songs. These editions were met with ‘an immediate success on both sides of the Atlantic’.<sup>7</sup> In particular, Moore’s *Irish Melodies* spread rapidly through American society. Like other ballad compositions from Ireland and the British Isles, particularly Scottish works by Robert Burns, pirated editions from multiple publishers only furthered the work’s dissemination. William H.A. Williams noted that ‘as early as 1815’, pocket-sized editions of *Irish Melodies* and its composite songs were spreading ‘widely among the American public’.<sup>8</sup>

This practice of songster spreading would be repeated in the Civil War as collections were sent from the home-front to the front-line. Moore’s work especially turned Irish song as a genre of music into ‘a commercial product’ that all could purchase, perform and hear.<sup>9</sup> His ballads and other fellow traditional songs were adopted by American society beyond diasporic centres, especially in the years prior to mass Irish migration in the 1840s and 1850s. Therefore, the beginning of the process of Irish songs taking on an American identity began with Moore’s works. As Robert Grimes argued, ‘the relative ease with which Irish traditional material could be

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<sup>5</sup> Dale Cockrell, “Nineteenth Century Popular Music”, *Cambridge History of American Music*, 180.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Broyles, “Art Music from 1860 to 1920”, *Cambridge History of American Music*, 240.

<sup>7</sup> Quinn, *Young Ireland and the Writing of Irish*, 45; William H.A. Williams, *‘Twas Only an Irishman’s Dream: The Language of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 19.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, *‘Twas Only an Irishman’s Dream*, 29.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

received into Anglo-American song' revealed a process of 'Anglicized Irish' music-making to which Moore made a significant contribution.<sup>10</sup>

Moore's songs made frequent appearances during the American Civil War in various guises, demonstrating how established the works were across Union and Confederate societies by the 1860s. The periodical *Dwight's Journal of Music* printed regular adverts for *Irish Melodies* collections, an interesting promotion given that before the war the music journal was mostly concerned with European classical and operatic airs, not traditional ethnic folk tunes.<sup>11</sup> Inclusion of adverts for Moore's work indicate the level of importance they received even amongst an American cultural elite, supporting Grimes' claim about their Americanisation. One advert informed *Dwight's* readers that 'no library is complete' without a copy of Moore's work. Although by 1861 there were 'many editions of these *Melodies* published in this country', the advert hoped this particular 'very neat, convenient, and durable form [of] the charming ballads' would appeal to buyers.<sup>12</sup> During the war itself, Moore's songs continued to be disseminated, often in individual form as part of Union and Confederate songster collections. For instance, numerous Southern songbooks included several reprints of Moore's most famous songs including *The Last Rose of Summer*, *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls* and *The Minstrel Boy*.

The universal appeal of *Irish Melodies*, along with the connection it had to Irish cultural heritage, was appropriated by the diaspora on specific occasions during

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<sup>10</sup> Robert R. Grimes, *How Shall We Sing in a Foreign Land? Music of Irish Catholic Immigrants in the Antebellum United States* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 171.

<sup>11</sup> The Bostonian classical music scholar John Sullivan Dwight established *Dwight's Journal of Music, A Paper of Art and Literature* (Boston: Oliver Ditson) in 1852. Despite holding 'lofty views of music', Dwight 'considered the role of music in a globalised space' and used his eponymous *Journal* and other writings to promote and report European musical developments and histories, including traditional Celtic folk music discussion and advertisements, Catherine Jones, *Literature and Music in the Atlantic World, 1767-1867* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); 117; 194.

<sup>12</sup> *Irish Melodies* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 9 March 1861.

the Civil War. At the New York Friendly Sons of St. Patrick's dinner held in honour of Ireland's patron saint in 1861, the diaspora's *Irish-American* newspaper reported that among the songs and music played, Moore's *The Minstrel Boy* was sung before declarations of Irish loyalty to the American Union on the eve of conflict.<sup>13</sup> The following year, the newspaper provided more detail on the musical aspects the society's 1862 St. Patrick's Day event. It reported that 'Gustavus Geary, the celebrated Irish tenor' and 'an excellent band of music [played] Irish and American National airs through the evening'. This included the appropriate *St. Patrick's Day* ballad, followed by *The Star Spangled Banner* and *The Minstrel Boy* once again.<sup>14</sup>

The extent to which Moore's *Irish Melodies* dominated pre-Civil War Irish traditional music and song makes it hard to separate his cultural output from other traditional Irish productions circulating mid-nineteenth century America. *One Hundred Songs of Ireland*, a collection of 'words and music' advertised for sale in early 1861, was described as 'a capital collection, including the best sentimental, patriotic, traditional and humorous Songs and Melodies of 'the land of sweet Erin''. Claiming to be 'the most complete compilation of Irish songs, published in connection with Music, obtainable in' America, this collection also contained 'amongst the number...several of Moore's best songs'.<sup>15</sup> However, other Irish song collections originally produced in Ireland and later disseminated in the United States were also circulating by the Civil War and did not rely on Moore's name for publicity. One particular example was the 1843 *Spirit of the Nation*, a publication of predominately Irish nationalist works by Thomas Davis and Young Irelanders first collated and printed in Dublin.

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<sup>13</sup> *The Irish-American* (New York), 18 March 1861.

<sup>14</sup> *Irish-American*, 18 March 1862.

<sup>15</sup> *One Hundred Songs of Ireland* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 26 January 1861.



Like *Irish Melodies*, *Spirit of the Nation* soon spread to America and gained popularity. Charles Gavan Duffy ‘claimed that more copies were sold than any other book published in Ireland’. The songster reached nearly one hundred published editions and like *Irish Melodies*, continued to be produced until the 1930s on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>16</sup> However, it is questionable just how widespread its dissemination was in America compared to Moore’s work. The only hint about the *Spirit of the Nation*’s content during the war appears in Thomas Francis Meagher’s account of the Irish-dominant 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia’s journey to Manassas in July 1861. Describing the bivouac one evening, the then-Captain Meagher, originally from Waterford and who served in and alongside the unit with his own band of New York Zouave soldiers, noted that Irish-born and descended voices:

More than once gave way to cheerier ones, rudely musical with all the proverbial spirit of the Irish soldier, his pride, recklessness and love. Snatches of songs – mostly those that Davis wrote for us – broke at times through the subdued buzz and hum of those darkened ranks.<sup>17</sup>

Meagher’s description of an early wartime occurrence of Irish soldiers singing was also a rare direct comment about Thomas Davis and his Irish nationalist ballads in a publication written for a wider American audience. Given Meagher’s own personal connection to Davis as both a Young Irelander in the 1840s, and a former close associate of the Irish writer, it is questionable whether he was using nostalgic nationalist balladry sentiment to drum up diaspora volunteer support for the war effort. It does, however, present a very lyrical account of Irish song dissemination within a wartime setting. Meagher’s comment connected Irish cultural heritage to the formation of a new transnational story as the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia became the

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<sup>16</sup> Quinn, *Young Ireland*, 50.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, *The Last Days of the 69<sup>th</sup> in Virginia, A Narrative in Three Parts* (New York: Lynch & Cole, 1861), 3-4.

subject of wartime ballads just as Davis had penned songs about Irish foreign military service in the 1840s.

## 2.2 Cultural Appropriation of Irish and Scottish Music and Songs

The prevalence of Irish songs and airs appearing in wartime songsters reveals how integral Irish productions were to American musical culture. This was especially true of two non-Thomas Moore traditional ballads: *Kathleen Mavourneen* and *The Girl I Left Behind*. Englishman Frederick Nicholls Crouch composed the former in the 1830s, a sentimental romantic ballad about an Irish immigrant and his sweetheart, with lyrics written by Crouch's wife Julia Crawford.<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting that although *Kathleen Mavourneen* had English roots, it was very much an Irish ballad. As Seán O'Boyle has highlighted, 'traditions so overlap' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 'that it is impossible to dogmatise about the origins of some songs, either in words or in music'. While a song and ballad tune may not necessarily originate from an Irish-born musician like Thomas Moore, *Kathleen Mavourneen*'s 'poetry is ultimately Irish in origin'.<sup>19</sup> It appeared in the United States around 1840, within a couple of years of publication in England. Crouch himself migrated in 1849 and discovered his ballads, particularly *Kathleen Mavourneen*, had 'already been pirated by American publishers' and spread through the country.<sup>20</sup> During the Civil War, the song regularly appeared in Union and Confederate songsters. Full and shortened versions of the ballad appeared frequently in Southern music collections, and Crouch

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<sup>18</sup> *Kathleen Mavourneen*, Julia Crawford (c.1838). Musicological debate surrounds when Crouch published the song: 1838 is the likely date, although a version possibly appeared in 1835. Doubt also exists about Crawford's identity and whether she was Crouch's wife, Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream*, 41; Steven H. Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 84.

<sup>19</sup> Seán O'Boyle, *The Irish Song Tradition* (Dublin: Gilbert Dalton, 1976), 16.

<sup>20</sup> Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream*, 41.

would no doubt have heard and played the song on a regular basis as trumpeter in the Confederate Army.

By comparison, *The Girl I Left Behind*, also published as *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, had existed in Irish traditional folk music repertoire as both a song and as a ballad tune in Ireland and in America since the late eighteenth century. Christian McWhirter has observed that variations of the song ‘had been associated with soldiers for at least two hundred years’ before the Civil War.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, ‘it had been played and sung by American soldiers on the march since the Revolutionary War’, becoming a ‘long-established import’ that was ‘widely popular both on stage’ in antebellum music halls and as a dance tune, hence its inclusion in numerous publications by the 1860s.<sup>22</sup> It was adopted into American musical culture and also became associated with other ethnic military communities. For instance, German American Union soldiers adopted the tune as the foundation for their popular war ballad *I Goes To Fight Mit Sigel*.

The tune also remained connected to Irish soldiering experience through the publication of the antebellum *Songs of the Camp*. Set to the variant ballad tune *The Girls We Left Behind Us*, the song was published in *The Camp-Fire Songster* in 1862. The lyrics sang of broader military service by Irish and British Isles soldiers. It presented four-nations commentary on general warfare, singing about the ‘brave hearts from Severn and from Clyde, and from the banks of Shannon’, relating to Welsh, Scottish and Irish military service.<sup>23</sup> The American wartime diplomat Bayard Taylor wrote the song originally under the title *A Crimean Episode* in 1854. Verses sang about the Crimean War, which included Irish-born and descended soldiers who

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<sup>21</sup> Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 24.

<sup>22</sup> Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era*, 86.

<sup>23</sup> *Songs of the Camp*, Bayard Taylor, in *The Camp-Fire Songster: A Collection of Popular, Patriotic, National, Pathetic, and Jolly Songs, Suited for the Camp or March, Containing a Number of Songs Never Before Printed* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 65-66.

served in the British Army. Taylor used the older Irish tune as his lyrical foundation. *Dwight's Journal of Music* printed this original version in September 1861, an interesting comparison to the subsequent amended adaptation seen in *The Camp-Fire Songster*.<sup>24</sup> Both copies retained the reference to four nations' martial service and both continued to be sung to the established traditional Irish ballad of *The Girl I Left Behind*.

Other traditional and more recent Irish tunes and songs were heard throughout antebellum and Civil War society, though none reached the same level of constant republishing in various forms as Moore's songs, *Kathleen Mavourneen* or *The Girl I Left Behind*. One folk song, *The Irishman's Shanty* (c.1859), made a few appearances in wartime song collections. This suggests a level of popularity for the piece that led to publishers printing differing song sheet versions. It was also included in songsters such as one edition of *Hopkins' New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* in 1861.<sup>25</sup> A different Hopkins' songbook contained another general Irish folk song, *Limerick Races* (c.1861).<sup>26</sup> The inclusion of both songs in these two particular Confederate songsters speaks to the fact that they were published in Louisiana, the state that was home to the largest population of the diaspora in the South.<sup>27</sup> Thus they would have appealed to those of Irish descent in the region. Their publication also again relates to the ongoing wider circulation of general traditional Irish songs across American society.

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<sup>24</sup> *A Crimean Episode*, Bayard Taylor, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 28 September 1861.

<sup>25</sup> *The Irishman's Shanty* (c.1859), in *Hopkins' New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* (New Orleans: John Hopkins, 1861), 10-11.

<sup>26</sup> *Limerick Races*, in *Hopkins' New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* (New Orleans: John Hopkins, c.1861), 17-18.

<sup>27</sup> By 1860, Louisiana's Irish population was over 28,000: 'in South Carolina and Louisiana over 70% of the Irish lived in the largest cities, Charleston and New Orleans', David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 7.

This cultural appropriation and knowledge of Irish tunes and ballads in the United States is counter to the dominant historiographical narrative centring on how the Irish – especially Irish Catholic migrants who settled in the United States in the 1840s and 1850s – were on the peripheries of society. This group of immigrants, mostly in the eastern seaboard's urban areas, were subject to nativist anti-Irish attack in local and national politics during this time. It is an aspect that Irish American studies have focused on, forgetting the diaspora's contributions during the subsequent conflict part of the broader mid-century Civil War era. Historical studies present an impression that the Irish in the United States were not broadly accepted socially or politically at this time, with anti-Catholic Irish views held by national and regional political administrations brought to the fore in scholarship, and the sense that the Catholic Irish migrants were on the bottom rungs of society with working-class counterparts, just ahead of free blacks and enslaved African Americans.

In relation to cultural adoption, however, the influence and dissemination of Irish songs and music, singing and song-writing traditions tells a different story. It is one of acceptance and Irish dominance the United States in this same period. Their cultural strength challenges arguments about social exclusion and highlights a level of Irish diaspora acceptance in the country, at least in relation to certain aspects. Cultural dissemination of Irish songs contests the idea that the Irish in American society were disconnected. They show how the United States came to subsume Irish song and music culture into its own. The knowledge of musical air tunes originating from across the Atlantic is a case in point. Most songster collections published the lyrics only, relying on a high level of public musical literacy that assumed readers and performers would know the relevant singing tune. The fact that so many Irish ballads appeared in both antebellum and wartime collections, and were sold by publishers in

songsheet and music score form during these periods, shows the impact of Irish singing and song writing culture in America.

If anything, Irish songs and music had a cultural presence that predated the challenges of the mid-nineteenth century Famine generation. It is also interesting to observe that even in areas where Irish-born and descended populations were smaller relative to the diasporic centres of New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, Irish music and song was prevalent. The fact that there are fewer specific songs about Irish-born and descended soldiers in the Confederate Army is related to the smaller number of Irish residents in the Confederate states by comparison to their Union brethren. Yet, simultaneously, Confederate songsters are full of references to traditional Irish music and songs from before the war, revealing again how widespread and adopted those pieces were beyond the diaspora.

Their use was also crucial as part of the formation of Confederate national song and music culture during the war. Debates over the meaning and creation of separate Confederate national identity are beyond the scope of this study, but the attempted creation of a distinct music and song tradition during the war connects to the wider American dissemination of Irish and other ethnic traditional folk tunes and ballads in this period. One argument is that ‘every component of Confederate culture needed to be original’ to establish a stronger separate identity that could not be tied to Union culture. ‘Any hint of foreign intrusion’ was guarded against.<sup>28</sup> This echoes the prefatory commentary of the 1864 Confederate *Southern Soldier’s Prize Songster*. The publisher W.F. Wisley noted that over the course of the war:

Many songbooks have been issued to supply the great demand for that species of literature in our Army, but they have been almost

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<sup>28</sup> Michael T. Bernath, *Confederate Minds: The Struggle For Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 231-32.

exclusively collections of European or Yankee lyrics, ill-ly suited, if not adverse, to the spirit and purposes of our people.

In an attempt to aid Confederate cultural nationalism, Wisley stated he was ‘determined to use his efforts to produce a collection of original songs by Southern writers...credible to the heart and mind of our country’.<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, the continual presence of lyrical ‘foreign intrusion’ of European musical tunes made attempts to create a separate Confederate musical culture unsuccessful. Irish traditional melodies and songs, as well as other tunes and ballads from the British Isles and Europe were too well established across American culture to be removed fully, even after Confederate secession.

Indeed, despite Wisley’s bold introductory claim, *The Southern Soldier’s Prize Songster* itself betrayed the reality of non-American original music, although by this point in their cultural dissemination these tunes had American identities that did not necessarily acknowledge their transnational origins. For instance, the Confederate songster contained several adaptations of *Yankee Doodle*, which carried a tune originally from England. The popular Confederate song *God Save the South*, set to the English anthemic air *God Save the King* also appeared.<sup>30</sup> Additionally the collection contained a wartime-composed ballad called *Clocknaben* that drew on another ethnic musical and cultural tradition from across the Atlantic. According the explanatory song footnote, the title referred to ‘the gathering cry of one of the clans of Scotland’

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<sup>29</sup> *The Southern Soldier’s Prize Songster: Containing Material and Patriotic Pieces (Chiefly Original) Applicable to the Present War* (Mobile: W.F. Wisley, 1864), 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> *Yankee Doodle*’s complex origin generates musicological debate. It was even the subject of an article published at the start of the Civil War, which traced the tune to an English nursery rhyme from the mid-1600s. There was also suggestion it evolved from contemporary German music. The tune’s American identity was formed ‘it was supposed, in the spring of 1775, after the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord’, “The Origin of Yankee Doodle” in *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, 6 July 1861.

as depicted by Sir Walter Scott.<sup>31</sup> This example was one of many Scottish-related outputs that, like their Irish counterparts, shaped American musical culture from the colonial period.

Comparatively, Scottish ballads and tunes in the United States show that the Irish example was by no means unique in the country. Indeed, O'Boyle has noted that 'two important tributaries, Scots and English, flow into the mainstream of Irish song', influencing outputs before they had travelled across the Atlantic.<sup>32</sup> This helped the establishment of a wider Celtic musical culture in the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Williams has argued that Scottish music and parlour songs 'appear...about as often as the Irish' examples. It was not until Moore's collections were sold in America that Irish music supplanted that of their Scottish cultural cousins.<sup>34</sup> When *Dwight's Journal of Music* advertised *One Hundred Songs of Scotland*, it noted that 'a musical family cannot afford to be without a good edition of the songs of Scotland...In a musical library of half a dozen volumes, these songs should be one of the six'.<sup>35</sup>

Similar to Moore's *Irish Melodies* songs, *Kathleen Mavourneen* and *The Girl I Left Behind*, several particular Scottish ballad tunes and songs reappear throughout Civil War collections. Scottish ballads such as *Annie Laurie*, versions of *Auld Lang Syne*, and *Bruce's Address to his Army*, also known as *Scots Wha Hae* (or the longer form *Scots Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Bled*), were especially popular with soldiers and civilians on either side. The latter two were Robert Burns' compositions. Burns,

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<sup>31</sup> *Clocknaben*, in *Southern Soldier's Prize Songster*, 96.

<sup>32</sup> O'Boyle, *Irish Song Tradition*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Welsh song and music traditions remained predominantly within Welsh American diasporic settings: smaller community numbers and language difference limited dissemination. However, *Dwight's* printed an advertisement for *The Harp of Wales*, 'a fine parlour song' by Welsh composer Brinley Richards, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 28 September 1861.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, 'Twas Only An Irishman's Dream', 78.

<sup>35</sup> *One Hundred Songs of Scotland* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 28 February 1861. Moore's *Irish Melodies* (or another Irish song collection) would be included amongst the other recommended musical volumes.



writing some two decades before Moore, received even greater widespread popularity in the early American republic, and continued to be a firm cultural favourite across the nation.<sup>36</sup>

One particular Burns ballad verse had continuing resonance in both the North and South. *Scots Wha Hae* reappears as the air of several Confederate compositions, revealing a similar knowledge of the tune across American society comparable to contemporary Irish music. The *Texan General's Address to his Army* (1864) was one such song, with the air recalling a Scottish Wars of Independence past to cement a longer heritage of Celtic fighting inspiration for Confederate listeners.<sup>37</sup> The tune was also used as the foundation for *War Song for the 79<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, dedicated to the Union Army's 79<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry.<sup>38</sup> Contemporaries of the Irish 69<sup>th</sup> New York, the unit were named in honour of their Scottish British Army regimental ancestors and carried the same 'Highlanders' moniker. In *War Song for the 79<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, Scottish American soldiers used the traditional Scottish tune of *Scots Wha Hae* to create a song about their wartime service. This was similar to the way Irish American regiments appropriated Irish tunes for their own wartime compositions.

Confederate use of Scottish musical tunes is in keeping with theories of Southern-Celtic identity associations. Connections between Scotland and Southern American states existed since the seventeenth century. As Rowland Berthoff observed, 'the same tunes have been played on both on both instruments' such as

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<sup>36</sup> For more on Scottish song and music influence in the United States and its relationship to Irish examples see Broyles, 'Immigrant, Folk, and Regional Musics', 139-141; Williams, *'Twas Only and Irishman's Dream*, 78-81; Michael C. Scroggins, *The Scotch-Irish Influence on Country Music in the Carolinas: Border Ballads, Fiddle Tunes and Sacred Songs* (Charleston: The History Press, 2013); David Atkinson and Steve Roud, eds., *Street Ballads in the Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America: The Interface Between Print and Oral Traditions* (London: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>37</sup> *Texan General's Address to his Army* in *The Rebel Songster: Containing a Choice Collection of Sentimental, Patriotic and Comic Songs, Compiled by a Musical Gentleman of this City* (Richmond: Ayres & Wade, 1864), 25-26.

<sup>38</sup> *War Song for the 79<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: J. Wrigley, 1861).

bagpipes and fiddles ‘in much the same style’ from that time.<sup>39</sup> The war appears to have strengthened this aspect of Southern identity, at least on a cultural level.<sup>40</sup> The examples of *Scots Wha Hae* and *Clocknaben* support Caroline Moseley’s argument that ‘Southern patriotic songs are heavy with the rhetoric of chivalry and feudalism’ component themes of Irish and Scottish Celtic ballad and oral myth culture. The American popularity of Burns and Walter Scott’s poetical and literary outputs helped both Union and Confederate images of ‘knighthood and chivalry’ echo in wartime songs set to Scottish tunes.<sup>41</sup>

Like antebellum Irish songs and music, Scottish folk songs became ‘Anglicized-Scottish songs’ – meaning Americanised. They sat alongside Irish pieces through a similar pattern of transnational dissemination and assimilation.<sup>42</sup> In addition, there was one particular Civil War musical and song production originating in the South that combined Scottish, Irish and American elements with a success that placed it above all other examples. *The Irish Jaunting Car* had a significant impact on Confederate and Union culture. The tune’s multi-layered Irish, American and Confederate resonance is in need of closer analysis to understand the impact of *The Irish Jaunting Car* during the American Civil War.

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<sup>39</sup> Rowland Berthoff, “Celtic Mist Over the South”, *The Journal of Southern History*, 52:4 (1986), 535.

<sup>40</sup> For analysis of perceived Southern Celtic cultural heritage and Civil War military traditions see Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamison, *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1982), 172-191; W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991, first edition 1941).

<sup>41</sup> Caroline Moseley, “Irrepressible Conflict: Differences Between Northern and Southern Songs of the Civil War”, *Journal of Popular Culture*, 25:2 (1991), 49-50.

<sup>42</sup> Williams, *‘Twas Only An Irishman’s Dream*, 80.

### 2.3 Harry Macarthy, *The Irish Jaunting Car* and *The Bonnie Blue Flag*

By the time English-born, Ulster-Scot songwriter and entertainer Harry Macarthy arrived in Louisiana in August 1861 to give a series of his ‘personation’ comic impressionist concerts and music hall shows, the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* described him as the ‘author of the New National Song of the South’.<sup>43</sup> The advert was referring to *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, first written by Macarthy several months earlier to commemorate Mississippi’s secession where the Bonnie Blue Flag – a blue flag with a single white star that harked back to the 1810 Republic of West Florida – was waved at the state’s convention. The lyrics sang of Southern heritage, Confederate nationalism, and each seceded state’s desire to defend their independence under the Bonnie Blue banner. After *Dixie*, the song became a de-facto Confederate anthem and spread through the South within weeks of Macarthy’s first publication. The song’s overwhelming success, however, was not solely due to its passionate Confederate nationalist rhetoric. The upbeat marching-pace tune Macarthy set to the lyrics had existed in American musical culture since the eighteenth century. The success and dissemination of this Confederate, and later Union, American song owed much to the exemplar transnational tune of *The Irish Jaunting Car*.

Versions of *The Irish Jaunting Car* can be found in Irish folk music tradition from the late 1700s, but song adaptations that provided its nineteenth century melody name appeared in Ireland during the mid-1800s. The American use of *The Jaunting Car* can be traced to a version composed by ‘the great polynational mimic’, Irish music hall performer Valentine Vousden. In the early 1850s he produced *The Irish Jaunting Car* to commemorate when Queen Victoria ‘came to Ireland, for her health

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<sup>43</sup> Advertisement, *New Orleans Daily Crescent* (New Orleans), 12 August 1861.

to drive'.<sup>44</sup> Originally published in Dublin, copies of the song were soon sold by London and Manchester publishing houses. As is common in this period, tracing an original *Irish Jaunting Car* version is extremely difficult. Adaptations produced in the British Isles contained different lyrics to those printed on songsheets from Dublin. It is likely though that Vousden's composition is the foundation piece upon which subsequent variations evolved on both sides of the Irish Sea and across the Atlantic. Similar themes appear in all the different Irish and British 1850s productions, including the main subject matter of a jaunting car carriage ride through Dublin, Victoria's royal visits to Ireland in 1849 and 1853, and crucially for subsequent connection to Irish military involvement in America, reference to the Crimean War.

Indeed, *The Irish Jaunting Car*, aside from being a general traditional Irish folk song, is also part of the genre of Irish songs that sang of the nation's relationship to foreign wars and military service. Many of its versions included verses that provided broadside balladry information about the events in the Crimea, thus dating publications to around 1854. Lyrics sang about how 'they are in want of men, both English and French...It's all about the Russian war'. They encouraged volunteering to fight the 'Russian bear', with the song's protagonist carriage driver stating that he would 'drive them [volunteer soldiers] all to Russia in my Irish Jaunting car'.<sup>45</sup> Within months of appearing in Ireland and Britain, American publishers produced the same ballad copies. One songsheet printed in New York even provided details of a Crimean War version of the song's dissemination into American musical culture. It noted that the lyrics had been 'sung to tremendous applause by J.B. Smith, the

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<sup>44</sup> *The Irish Jaunting Car*, Valentine Vousden (Dublin, 1854).

<sup>45</sup> *The Irish Jaunting Car* (London: H. Such, 1854). Other versions focused directly on the driver-narrator, named as Larry Doolan, Larry Doolain or Mickey Doolin.

Celebrated Irish Vocalist’ in one of the city’s music halls.<sup>46</sup> Music and songsheet adverts traced *The Irish Jaunting Car*’s antebellum dissemination. One 1857 example from Richmond placed the composition within a recently published collection of six hundred ‘different kinds’ of new songs that were described as ‘the grave, the gay, the comic’.<sup>47</sup> Despite different adaptations, all these songs were using the same tune and helped establish its firm place in the traditional Irish music lexicon, with *The Irish Jaunting Car* fixed as the melody’s name.<sup>48</sup>

The precise reason for Macarthy’s use of *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune as the foundation for *The Bonnie Blue Flag* is unknown, but it is likely it came from a number of influences that relate to the transnational propagation of traditional Irish music. One important factor was that Macarthy himself was a second-generation Ulster-Scot, born in England, but probably familiar with Irish and Scottish music due to the broader dissemination of both countries’ cultures across the British Isles. After migrating to America in 1849, the young Macarthy was part of P.T. Barnum’s troop of performers, where he honed his music hall song writing and acting talents. It is possible he interacted here with fellow future American Civil War Irish music and song distributors Charles Graham Halpine and Tony Pastor, and bandmaster Patrick Gilmore, all of whom had connections to Barnum during the 1850s at the same time printed copies of *The Irish Jaunting Car* circulated America. Well-known within the Irish diaspora and wider American society, its traditional music tune provided

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<sup>46</sup> *The Irish Jaunting Car* (New York: Andrews, c.1854-1855). Aside from the popular tune and divergent antebellum song versions, Americans were aware of what Irish jaunting cars were as they appeared in travel accounts. One report described a ‘peculiar and distinctive Irish vehicle, an outside jaunting-car, which has the merit of giving you a variety in the way of exercise...a vigilant and vigorous endeavour to keep yourself and your luggage on’, “Greenwood Leaves from Over the Sea” in *The National Era* (Washington D.C.), 23 September 1852.

<sup>47</sup> “New Songs at Richardson’s”, *The Daily Dispatch* (Richmond), 8 August 1857.

<sup>48</sup> A list of the songs researched for this study that used *The Irish Jaunting Car* melody can be seen in Appendix 2.

Macarthy with an established popular platform onto which he crafted his Confederate secession lyrics in 1861. As argued, there was nothing new in this intertextuality and practice. Many songs in America, especially in the Confederacy, had new lyrics grafted onto older Irish, Scottish and English tunes.

Macarthy's lyrical production is comparable to other contemporary Southern musical favourites with European roots. The poem *Maryland, My Maryland*, written at the start of the conflict by James Ryder Randall to emphasise pro-Confederate sentiment in the contentious Border State, was set to what was originally a medieval German tune, *Lauriger Horatius*, by Baltimore sisters Jennie and Hetty Cary not long after the poem's initial publication.<sup>49</sup> *Dixie*, written by the Irish descended Daniel Decatur Emmet, could trace its pre-war origins to a combination of minstrel show tunes and African American slave music. Thus Macarthy's *Bonnie Blue Flag* was merely adding to this convention of borrowing older ethnic musical styles to form new American creations.

The majority of the most popular Union and Confederate Civil War songs were based on tunes that had been present in America for decades before the conflict. Songwriters played to this knowledge when fixing their lyrical compositions to tunes because the fastest way for a performer and audience to learn and spread song words was to set them to familiar melodies, a practice developed from early European hymnal composition productions. *The Bonnie Blue Flag*'s fast dissemination was because a musically literate American population knew its *Irish Jaunting Car* tune. One advert for an adaptation of *The Bonnie Blue Flag* in the second half of the war noted that its 'air...is one familiar and original with our people and certainly

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<sup>49</sup> Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era*, 42. *Lauriger Horatius* is the tune for *Oh, Tannenbaum* (*Oh, Christmas Tree*).

enchanting'.<sup>50</sup> Other Confederate versions influenced by *The Bonnie Blue Flag* appeared throughout the conflict, furthering dissemination of *The Irish Jaunting Car* and *The Bonnie Blue Flag* melodies.

Macarthy's habit of adding new lyrics to his original version as Southern states seceded also inspired writers to pen their own additional verses. For example, *An Addition to the Bonnie Blue Flag*, published in a London-produced Confederate songster just after the war in 1866, provided two verses that stressed Kentucky's pro-Southern support. They were published as 'a tribute to true Kentuckians' loyal to the Confederacy and provided extra lyrics that could be added to performances of Macarthy's song.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, one Border State resident produced 'additional words to the *Bonnie Blue flag* as sung by Missourians during the war'. Lyrics again stressed Confederate sentiments, though it is unknown if these particular hand-written verses were ever printed and sold.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, such extra stanzas demonstrate how widespread Macarthy's song and its original tune were. His song provided inspiration for other song-writing adaptations.

Noticeably in original and subsequent versions, *The Bonnie Blue Flag* abandoned its Irish associations as it spread around the Confederacy, a transition cemented by Macarthy's arrival in New Orleans in the late summer of 1861. As well as Macarthy's own performance of the song on a regular basis to enthusiastic crowds of Confederate soldiers in the city's music halls, *The Bonnie Blue Flag's* dissemination through the South was aided by the commercial exploits of Armand Edward Blackmar, owner of the Confederacy's most successful music and song

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<sup>50</sup> *Winchester Daily Bulletin* (Tennessee), 13 March 1863.

<sup>51</sup> *An Addition to the Bonnie Blue Flag in War Lyrics and Songs of the South* (London: Spottiswoode & Co., 1866), 129.

<sup>52</sup> 'Additional words to *Bonnie Blue flag* as sung by the Missourians during the war' (c.1861), handwritten page of verses placed inside the *Virginia Songster* (Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1863), BA Confederate Collection.

publishing company.<sup>53</sup> Blackmar produced multiple songsheet copies, decorative song and music scorebooks with illustrated Bonnie Blue Flag covers, and songster collections, including one first produced in 1862 that was named after Macarthy's Confederate anthem. Through Blackmar's printing house dissemination, this Ulster-Scot lyricist became a Confederate writer. References to his ethnicity and that of the original tune were removed. On multiple *Bonnie Blue Flag* scorebooks containing pianoforte music notations, performers were told to play and sing the song 'with spirit', making no reference to the original *Irish Jaunting Car* air.<sup>54</sup>

Likewise songsheet versions provided no tune description, even when Northern publishers reproduced the Confederate song.<sup>55</sup> Knowledge of the air was presumed. In wartime copies printed in Britain, *The Bonnie Blue Flag* was described purely as 'a Southern Patriotic Song'.<sup>56</sup> When Cheltenham-based 'music sellers to the Queen' Edward Hale & Co. printed their musical score edition in 1864, the title cover described it as a 'National Confederate Song' with no other associations, even though its Irish melody would have been familiar in Britain.<sup>57</sup> Pianoforte 'variations' further adapted the tune with other musical arrangements into one composition. These publications certainly helped establish *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, and re-established *The Irish Jaunting Car*, in Confederate and wider American musical culture. However, it

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<sup>53</sup> Armand and his brother Henry Clay Blackmar produced over 230 wartime compositions, 'more than any other firm' in the Confederacy, Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, Harry Macarthy (New Orleans: A.E. Blackmar & Bro., 1861-1862). Blackmar produced numerous editions of the song in New Orleans. When the Union occupied the city, General Benjamin F. Butler banned *The Bonnie Blue Flag*. Blackmar and Macarthy fled and the former re-opened his business in Augusta, Georgia, where he continued to print the Macarthy's Confederate songs.

<sup>55</sup> *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, Harry Macarthy (New York: H. De Marsan, c.1861); Boston's Horace Partridge printed other songsheet copies between 1861-1862.

<sup>56</sup> *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, Harry Macarthy (Liverpool: Hime & Son, c.1862). Sister publishing houses in London and Manchester also produced copies.

<sup>57</sup> *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, Harry Macarthy (Cheltenham: Edward Hale & Co., 1864).



did so at the cost of dismissing its older traditional Irish musical extraction.<sup>58</sup> By the time Blackmar printed his third edition of *The Bonnie Blue Flag Song Book* in 1863, the song was listed as having ‘words and music by Harry Macarthy’, establishing the lyricist as the tune’s composer.<sup>59</sup> Although far from the truth, this example was another indicator of the Irish piece adopting a Confederate American identity during the war.

This musical characteristic was strengthened by other ballads produced later in the conflict that also used Macarthy’s *Bonnie Blue Flag* air. The famous Confederate ballad *The Homespun Dress*, also published as *The Southern Girl’s Song*, kept *The Bonnie Blue Flag*’s separate distinctive chorus refrain, adapting the original’s ‘Hurrah! Hurrah! For Southern rights Hurrah! Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star!’ to ‘Hurrah! Hurrah! For the sunny South so dear; three cheers for the homespun dress the Southern ladies wear!’<sup>60</sup> It also reflected the same sentiments of Southern national pride, focusing particularly on the home-front sacrifice women made in support of the Confederate cause – in this case Southern women making homespun material clothing. ‘Set to the infectious tune of *The Bonnie Blue Flag*’, *The Homespun Dress* first appeared in 1862. It was published once again by Armand Blackmar, extending his New Orleans-based printing house’s association with disseminating the traditional Irish tune.<sup>61</sup> There was a subtle difference in this version’s use of the melody though. *The Homespun Dress* was to be sung at a much slower, lamenting pace instead of one with upbeat, martial and enthusiastic

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<sup>58</sup> *Bonnie Blue Flag* pianoforte variations were published by several printing houses, including Baltimore’s Miller & Beacham, Philadelphia’s Lee & Walker (1862) and Blackmar & Bro. (1862-1864).

<sup>59</sup> *The Bonnie Blue Flag Song Book*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Augusta: A.E. Blackmar & Bro., 1863).

<sup>60</sup> *The Homespun Dress*, Carrie Bell Sinclair (New Orleans: A.E. Blackmar, 1864).

<sup>61</sup> James A. Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan: Civil War Soldiers, Music and Community During Winter Quarters, Virginia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 147.

connotations. This tonal change added to the sense of secessionist sacrificial gravitas that the lyrics conveyed.

Other wartime songs using *The Irish Jaunting Car/The Bonnie Blue Flag* air also make similar musical alteration to suit a more soporific tone. This included *Mother on the Brain*, a sombre sentimental song about a soldier's dying thoughts.<sup>62</sup> However, regardless of claims about *The Homespun Dress* being prevalent in the Confederacy, such as James A. Davis stating that the song tune's 'contrafactum proved extremely popular with both civilians and soldiers', it never reached the same widespread dissemination as *The Bonnie Blue Flag*.<sup>63</sup> In numerous Confederate songsters, the ballad is missing from publications. This limits the notion that it was heard and reproduced throughout the South with the same regularity as its song forefather.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, Macarthy's re-appropriation of his own song at the end of the Civil War in 1865, when he wrote the unifying ballad *Our Country's Flag*, failed to meet the same high level of dissemination and significance as his earlier wartime anthem.<sup>65</sup> In these examples, lyrical subject matter impacted song popularity over *The Irish Jaunting Car*'s established musical familiarity.

At the same time as these Confederate versions, *The Bonnie Blue Flag* developed a Union American identity that removed the tune further from its traditional Irish roots. In keeping with a common habit of both sides adopting and

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<sup>62</sup> *Mother on the Brain*, John C. Cross (New York: H. De Marsan, 1864).

<sup>63</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 147.

<sup>64</sup> In the ten specific Confederate songster publications analysed for this study, *The Homespun Dress* appears once. It is possible the tone of women's home-front sacrifice was too melancholy, although many Confederate and Union songs appeared regularly about the war's impact on society. If anything, this song celebrated Southern women's devotion and strengthened Confederate national pride. Why such an allegedly popular Southern ballad is absent from contemporary sources is thus unknown.

<sup>65</sup> *Our Country's Flag*, Harry Macarthy (1865). Macarthy song failed to gain widespread Union and Confederate success precisely because of its unifying attempt. The original *Bonnie Blue Flag* and subsequent adaptations were centred on sectional divides. The song remained as a Confederate anthem in American music culture memory but Union versions fell out of postbellum circulation.

adapting their respective wartime songs to create opposing responses and parodies, within months of Macarthy's song spreading successfully in the seceded states Northern writers and publishers produced their own versions with different lyrics. Importantly these again carried *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune, though none stated this musical heritage. One frequently reproduced Union response was *A Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag* written by a Mrs. C. Sterett in 1862. On the ballad's first songsheet copy, an explanatory note from the *Despatch* newspaper was added to explain the context for a Union response. It described Macarthy's *Bonnie Blue Flag* 'song published and set to music in New Orleans, and sung and played in every section of Secessia'. Yet, in the opinion of Union Army Captain Thomas H. Elliot, who wrote to the *Despatch*, while 'the music is delightful' it was 'well worthy of a better theme'. In other words pro-Union lyrics were needed to suit *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune. Sterett's version provided Elliot with an answer to his suggestion.<sup>66</sup>

The story behind this particular Union *Bonnie Blue Flag* dissemination echoes the phrasing of an advertisement in *Dwight's Journal of Music* from the February of the same year promoting the sale of *The Bonnie Red, White and Blue* (1862), another Union version of Macarthy's song. The advert noted that 'the melody is that of the *Bonnie Blue Flag*, very popular at the South, and it too good to be any longer coupled with a secesh [secessionist] song'. This Union version gave *The Irish Jaunting Car* air a 'new and reformed life' and the advert hoped it 'should be a favourite' in Northern musical culture.<sup>67</sup> Additional Union responses followed suit throughout 1862, including *Glorious Old Flag – A Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag* and *The Flag with the*

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<sup>66</sup> *A Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag*, C. Sterett (New York: S.T. Gordon, 1862). The song was also published under the title *The Bonnie Blue Flag*.

<sup>67</sup> *The Bonnie Blue Flag, Or Our Beautiful Flag* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 6 February 1862.

*Thirty Four Stars*, the latter of which kept the tune but turned the lyrical subject matter into one of American unity not sectional fighting.<sup>68</sup>

The most successful Union response was *The Bonnie Flag with the Stars and Stripes*, 'written in answer to the *Bonnie Blue Flag*' by a Colonel J.L. Geddes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infantry. Numerous scorebook copies of this song were printed between 1862 and 1863 that indicated how popular it was throughout northern society. Commemorative covers were issued to mark the thirtieth, fiftieth, one hundredth and '50<sup>th</sup> Thousand Edition' of the ballad's publication.<sup>69</sup> Again, all of these versions made no mention of the tune's Irish identity, or Macarthy's original *Bonnie Blue Flag* authorship. These examples were fundamentally American in their musical identity. They also transformed the traditional Irish air into an American melody. In other words, *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune had become American through its repeated cultural usage as the foundation to a plethora of Union and Confederate American lyrics during the Civil War era.

On the other hand, contrary to Union and Confederate Americanisation of *The Irish Jaunting Car* through the distribution of *The Bonnie Blue Flag* and its multiple adaptations, the diaspora did not abandon the tune altogether. One of the first Northern replies to Macarthy's song was produced at the start of the Civil War when the Union Army mobilised. Dedicated to the 13<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, *Hurrah for the Banner of Red, White and Blue* was advertised by *Dwight's Journal of Music* in June 1861 and written by Thomas M. Brown. Like the majority of the state's Union Army regiments, the 13<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts contained many Irish-born and descended soldiers, who would have recognised *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune.

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<sup>68</sup> *Glorious Old Flag, A Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag* (Philadelphia: Marsh, 1862); *The Flag with the Thirty Four Stars* (Cincinnati: A.C. Peters & Bro., 1862)

<sup>69</sup> *The Bonnie Flag with the Stars and Stripes*, J.L. Geddes (St. Louis: Balmer and Weber, 1862).

Even the advert alluded to the melody's connection to the diaspora's cultural heritage. It stated that it was 'a song for the Irish volunteers of the Union, adapted to a well-known Irish air', though it did not state its name explicitly.<sup>70</sup> Despite this Irish musical culture recall though, it is interesting to note that the subject matter of the song and its title was one centred on the American Union and Irish volunteering service. This was an indicator of Irish articulation about identity transition to one that emphasised American loyalty and nationality through song.

In addition, Brown's use of *The Irish Jaunting Car* for his song about Irish volunteers in the Union Army harked back to another musical tradition from Ireland familiar within the diaspora. Numerous *Irish Volunteer*-entitled ballads had circulated around Ireland from the eighteenth century onwards inspired by Irish Patriot groups in the late 1700s. These songs reflected Irish martial and political themes carried to the United States through cultural emigration. This included *The Irish Volunteers of 1860*, a contemporary song about British Army Irish soldiers, local Irish county issues and nationalist sentiment.<sup>71</sup> Though unstated on broadside editions, the verse structure fits *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune. It provides another pre-American Civil War example of the tune's dissemination and link to Irish soldiering. Examples such as these raise a question about whether Macarthy used the tune for *The Bonnie Blue Flag* because he knew *The Irish Jaunting Car* melody or because he knew the air from Irish volunteering songs, or both. As is often the musicological case, both music avenues are long enough for the origin to be lost, yet both appear to have remained connected to the Irish cultural heritage and oral folk music traditions in mid-nineteenth century

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<sup>70</sup> *Hurrah for the Banner of Red, White and Blue* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music.*, 22 June 1861.

<sup>71</sup> *The Irish Volunteers of 1860*, (Ireland, c.1860).

America.<sup>72</sup> The Civil War understandably added to this *Irish Volunteer* genre. Whether inspired by Brown's local Massachusetts version, or from older Irish ballads, several songs appeared after 1862 that were set to *The Irish Jaunting Car/Irish Volunteer*-associated tune.

One such example by a Michael O'Riely sang of Irish loyalty to the Union cause and Irish volunteerism in the Union Army's Irish Brigade.<sup>73</sup> Likewise, Tony Pastor's *The Irish Volunteer No. 3* (1862) about Irish-born General Michael Corcoran mimicked other American Civil War Irish Volunteer songs not only in its theme but in its tune too.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, Arthur McFadden's song *Col. Owens' Gallant Irish Volunteers* (1861) about the Irish-dominated 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment was set to *The Irish Volunteer*, and thus by extension *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune.<sup>75</sup> These ballad examples reveal further blurring of Irish American identity focus. Here again were songs about Irish wartime service that focused on American loyalty, set to an old Irish tune that had become part of an American musical tradition. Additionally, through the shared dissemination of Irish and American wartime culture, the wider Union military community appropriated *Irish Volunteer* examples. *The Camp-Fire Songster* included *The New York Volunteer*, which sang of New York's strong spirit of volunteerism in the early part of the war.<sup>76</sup> This included the 69<sup>th</sup> New York. Its Irish soldiers received particular mention in the song's penultimate verse where lyrics

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<sup>72</sup> A group of *Irish Volunteer* songs from the American Civil War were also set to a different air, *The Yankee Man of War*, such as *Irish Volunteer* (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, c.1862). This tune was possibly of English origin, although its traceable history is unclear. The lyrical and musical pattern of these songs do not match *The Irish Jaunting Car* air.

<sup>73</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*, Michael O'Riely (New York: J. Wrigley, 1862). It is unclear if an Irish soldier or a music hall performer under a pseudonym wrote this version. The name is similar to Charles Graham Halpine's fictional Irish wartime character Miles O'Reilly, but he appeared later in the conflict.

<sup>74</sup> *The Irish Volunteer No. 3*, Tony Pastor (New York: J. Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>75</sup> Arthur McFadden, *Col. Owens' Gallant Irish Volunteers* (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, 1861).

<sup>76</sup> *The New York Volunteer*, in *Camp-Fire Songster*, 23-24.

referenced the unit's reorganisation as the foundation of the Irish Brigade.<sup>77</sup> While no print copy mentions its air, the lyrics, as with the other versions, fit that of *The Irish Jaunting Car*. The familiar tune, recognisable to both Irish and American audiences, would have helped the popularity of the song. *The New York Volunteer* went from a musical hall performance by Sam Long, to a printing house and into a songster for sale across the Union in 1862.

The combination of these music and lyrical factors made even Irish-specific appropriations of *The Irish Jaunting Car* universal. Songwriters continued to play to this musical familiarity to aid broader receivership of their compositions and ensure their lyrics would be memorable, especially if they were carrying a particular message aimed at wider society. This is the case in the tune's continual use for ballads about Irish American Union Army volunteer loyalty. It was the reason behind another important Irish wartime song. *What Irish Boys Can Do* was written in 'answer to *No Irish Need Apply*' in 1863, a lyrical response to lingering anti-Irish nativist criticisms about how devoted the diaspora was to the American Union cause. These criticisms, mostly voiced by American Party Know Nothing politicians before the war in the 1850s, were directed at Catholic immigrant communities and the Irish who resided in the eastern cities especially.<sup>78</sup> *What Irish Boys Can Do*'s sentiments about Irish-born and descended soldiers' service and the place of the diaspora in home-front society were directed at the whole country.<sup>79</sup> Instead of setting the lyrics to the tune of British

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<sup>77</sup> *The New York Volunteer*, Frank Spear (New York: J. Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>78</sup> By the Civil War, most anti-immigrant nativist sentiment had diminished while the politics of secession and abolition dominated domestic social politics, but rhetorical anti-Irish articulations could still be heard – as evidenced by the fact that *No Irish Need Apply* songs produced in the 1860s presented a pro-Irish lyrical voice to combat this hostility towards some sections of the Irish Catholic diaspora. Specific anti-Irish lyrical responses and historiographical debate over how widespread nativism was in the Civil War will be discussed in Chapter 7.

<sup>79</sup> *What Irish Boys Can Do – Answer to 'No Irish Need Apply'*, William Sutherland (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863).

and American antebellum *No Irish Need Apply* ballads, *What Irish Boys Can Do* was set to *The Irish Jaunting Car* melody in 1863. This reaffirmed the tune's traditional roots in a nod to Irish lyrical and literary references in the ballad itself and drew on the tune's success as recognisable American music. In other words, the music's subconscious sentiment stressed the Irish cultural impact on the country as well as social, military, political and economic contributions.

A counter to this argument, however, was a far more conscious postbellum Irish re-appropriation of *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune, which *What Irish Boys Can Do* influenced directly. *What Irishmen Have Done* was an American-published Irish nationalist ballad written for Fenian circles by songwriter Eugene T. Johnston, who often wrote mid-nineteenth century music hall songs related to the Irish American experience. The song continued a similar theme to its wartime counterpart, singing about Irish contributions to American society. One songsheet copy, published in New York by Charles Magnus around 1870, listed the air as *The Irish Jaunting Car*.<sup>80</sup> This was a deliberate diasporic reclamation of the song's inherent Irishness. Why Johnston and Magnus made this musical clarity is unknown. It is possible that as a Fenian ballad it helped enforce a nationalist sentimental message, harking back to an old established Irish tune instead of referring to its newer American identity, thus stressing Irish heritage. It also suggests *The Irish Jaunting Car* has yet to disappear from the musical lexicon despite the dominance of *The Bonnie Blue Flag*'s use as the tune's name during and after the Civil War. Indeed, there is some evidence in the conflict itself other Irish songs not directly related to the fighting were using *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune, such as *Dublin Jaunting Car*, 'a lively Irish song' that described a

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<sup>80</sup> *What Irish Boys Have Done*, Eugene T. Johnston (New York: Charles Magnus, c.1870).



carriage tour of Dublin. This folk example recalled the same lyrical themes as in the original 1850s melody versions.<sup>81</sup>

The multiple disseminations within the Irish diaspora, wider American Union and Confederate societies and the numerous uses and re-uses of *The Irish Jaunting Car* air during the Civil War are comparable with another popular Irish tune that developed its American identity in the same period. Much musicological debate exists around the origins of *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, often associated in the mid-nineteenth century with the Irish ballad *Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye*. The tune probably gained the latter title after the American Civil War, inspired by the former version, yet it can also be traced back to similar comparable pieces from the early 1600s appearing in Irish, Scottish and English folk music tradition. It evolved into military compositions tied to the British Army's colonial engagements in India, and the Crimean and Opium Wars. The specific *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* Civil War version sings more of general sentiments not explicit to the Irish experience of the conflict, thus analysis of the song is beyond the focus of this study.<sup>82</sup> What is parallel to *The Irish Jaunting Car*'s dissemination was the way in which Patrick Gilmore, the County Galway-born Massachusetts-based Union Army bandmaster and conductor, took a traditional (probable) Irish tune and used it as the foundation of his *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* lyrics in 1863, echoing Macarthy's *Bonnie Blue Flag* writing process.<sup>83</sup> Both Gilmore and Macarthy had Irish and Ulster-Scots

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<sup>81</sup> *Dublin Jaunting Car* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 18 April 1863. In addition, *Larry Maher's Big Five Gallon Jar* songsheet publications listed its air as *The Irish Jaunting Car*. This example was contemporaneous with Irish American drinking songs (New York: H. De Marsan, c.1860s).

<sup>82</sup> Jonathan Lighter, *The Best Antiwar Song Ever Written* (Windsor: Loomis House Press, 2012). Lighter's research on this particular piece and its myriad transnational musical developments and diffusion is extensive but remains undecided about which lyrical version of the ballad came first in folk song tradition.

<sup>83</sup> *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, Patrick Gilmore (Boston: Henry Tolman & Co., 1863). Gilmore wrote songs under the pseudonym 'Louis Lambert'.

cultural heritage associations and used this musical familiarity to construct their ballads. In turn, they furthered these respective melodies' American identities.

Certainly many Irish American Civil War songs were set to American music tunes from the 1860s, particularly airs whose origins were even more established than *The Irish Jaunting Car*. For example, Eugene T. Johnston set his lyrics for *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, a song about Michael Corcoran's Irish New York Union Army regimental command, to the 1850s American-produced melody *The Flag of Our Union*.<sup>84</sup> One American tune that gained particular use in Irish wartime song creation was *Columbia, Gem of the Ocean*, also called the *Red, White, and Blue*. The country's unofficial national anthem in the first half of the nineteenth century, the air was written in America in the 1840s. Unlike many of its patriotic national counterparts, including *The Star Spangled Banner*, which began as an English drinking song, *Columbia, Gem of the Ocean* had no prior musical life in the British Isles, Ireland or in Europe.

*Columbia, Gem of the Ocean/Red, White, and Blue* became the dominant American tune found on Irish wartime songsheets when the air was printed, including *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* and one Irish Brigade song from 1862.<sup>85</sup> The former even played on the American version's first line to stress its Irish identity, singing 'Oh! Hibernia, green Gem of thee Ocean', instead of 'O Columbia, the gem of the ocean'. The latter Irish Brigade song used the same tune for lyrics that extolled Irish fighting service in the Union Army and devotion to the country.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, the Fenians, who often appropriated melodies for their American Irish nationalist songs, made similar

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<sup>84</sup> *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, Eugene T. Johnston (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>85</sup> *The Irish Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, January 1862). Not all Irish Brigade songs were set to American musical tunes. For example, Kate C.M.'s *The Irish Brigade* was set to an Irish air, *My Heart's in Old Ireland*, in *The Continental Songster: A Collection of New, Spirited Patriotic Songs for the Times* (Philadelphia: A. Winch, 1863), 58-59.

<sup>86</sup> *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862).

use of this American air. For example, *Our Own Flag of Green* (c.1865) was sung to *Columbia, Gem of the Ocean*, which complicated the movement's own dual identity articulations.<sup>87</sup> Therefore the use of American patriotic music tunes reinforced a clear impression of the diaspora's American identity.

In *The Irish Jaunting Car* and *Bonnie Blue Flag* examples above, including those focusing on Irish American Civil War experience, the lyrical focus centred on America, on themes of fighting and serving the country on the battlefield and in society, on loyalty to the Stars and Stripes or Bonnie Blue/Confederate banners and of the ideals of republican democracy and freedom. Even though American Civil War *Irish Volunteer* ballads, *What Irish Boys Can Do* and their other adaptations used a tune that recalled an ethnic-Irish identity, the multiple dispersed variations of *The Irish Jaunting Car* air, coupled with lyrical sentiments that related to the diaspora's Civil War development of an American identity, further diluted the melody's inherent Irishness. Songs became simultaneous American-centred compositions because the Irish tune took on an American character, adding an Irish American singing voice to these lyrical sentiments. This again created a blurred dual identity of Irish American musical culture and allowed for the songs to be read and sung as both Irish and American with the melody's two national identities suiting whatever message performers and audiences wanted to express and hear.

Therefore, as *The Bonnie Blue Flag* and its offshoots spread through the country during the Civil War, *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune shed its Irish cultural connections as a result of its Americanisation, both lyrically and musically. Direct Irish connections to the song were lost beyond the diaspora, and within it too. This can be seen in the way in which even Irish-related songs that used the tune moved

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<sup>87</sup> *Our Own Flag of Green* (New York: J. Wrigley, c.1865).

their focus in lyrics to one based on an American articulation of ethnic identity. Such traditional cultural loss and evolution was in part thanks to Harry Macarthy himself, his adoption of *The Irish Jaunting Car* and the success of his Confederate *Bonnie Blue Flag*. The musical marrying of an established Irish air with a new melody for an American Union and Confederate nation was common practice, but this specific example and its subsequent influence on wider musical culture had the most significant impact of an Irish tune disseminating and becoming American by the mid-nineteenth century. It was into this musical climate of traditional tune appropriation and ballad writing adaptation that songs by and about the Irish fighting and living through the American Civil War circulated.



### **Chapter 3**

#### **‘As sung at Jones’ Wood’**

#### **The Production and Performance of Irish American Civil War Songs**

In June 1864, *Dwight’s Journal of Music* advertised a newly composed song dedicated to the Irish 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Written by Thomas M. Brown, *Cead Mille Fealthe – A Hundred Thousand Welcomes* gave ‘a hearty Irish welcome to the returning heroes of the 9<sup>th</sup> Mass. Regiment’ when they arrived back in Boston that summer. It was the only specific 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts song produced during the conflict, written for ‘the officers who went, but did not return with the others’.<sup>1</sup> According to the song’s scorebook, the lyrics were ‘written and adapted to a favourite Irish melody’, Thomas Moore’s *The Pretty Girl Milking Her Cow*.<sup>2</sup> There was a commercial reason behind this advertisement. During the conflict, the prolific Boston-based publisher Oliver Ditson printed *Dwight’s Journal of Music*. In addition, Ditson sold a significant number of Irish-related wartime ballads and musical content. *Dwight’s* advertising pages not only displayed notices of new music and songs for sale, but also helped Ditson publicise other areas of his production line, including *Cead Mille Fealthe*.

The song’s scorebook with lyrics and pianoforte music, also sold by Ditson, was advertised in *Dwight’s* the day after the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts mustered out of Union Army service. In keeping with the fast output of Civil War songs about particular events during the conflict, the lyricist Brown and publisher Ditson worked quickly to

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<sup>1</sup> *Cead Mille Fealthe* Advertisement, *Dwight’s Journal of Music, A Paper of Art and Literature* (Boston: Oliver Ditson), 25 June 1864.

<sup>2</sup> *Cead Mille Fealthe – A Hundred Thousand Welcomes*, Thomas M. Brown (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1864). Brown’s name was printed occasionally in error as ‘Browne’. This ballad followed the lyricist’s other Massachusetts regiment composition *Hurrah for the Banner of Red, White and Blue*, dedicated to the 13th Massachusetts Infantry in the summer of 1861 and mentioned previously in this study.

print, advertise and sell *Cead Mille Fealthe* in time for the regiment's return to Boston and celebrations held in their honour. The song was performed at these events. Ditson's publishing and advertising of *Cead Mille Fealthe* presents a rare traceable direct dissemination route from the publication to commercial production of an Irish wartime ballad. Before analysing the expressions of Irish America Civil War songs, it is important to discuss how these songs and their sentiments circulated through Union and Confederate societies. Their dissemination provides an insight into their place within wider American musical culture. Irish wartime songs were not only subsumed into the cultural climate but also followed established antebellum practices of traditional Irish music and song adoption in America as already discussed.

This chapter will examine the production and performance of Irish music and songs across the country during the Civil War era, building on an established Irish musical culture influence in the country by the 1860s. Music and songs have long been ubiquitous in American, and indeed Irish, British and European culture and society, so much so that many Irish soldiers and officers' accounts did not make regular mention of the plethora of songs written by and about them during the Civil War. That does not mean these pieces had no value. The fact that discussion of Irish song sharing practices and hearing Irish song performances was rare is in keeping with wider musical habits on the front-line and home-front.

As Christian McWhirter has argued, 'Civil War soldiers were highly musical and constituted a huge market for new songs', becoming 'enthusiastic consumers [and]...most effective distributors' of lyrical and musical outputs.<sup>3</sup> Songs by and about the Irish wartime experience were part of this wartime cultural development. Moreover, as Steven H. Cornelius highlighted, 'the onset of the war stimulated music

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<sup>3</sup> Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 3.

publishing as composers set quickly unfolding events to music', with printing houses profiting from the boom in new lyrical and musical productivity.<sup>4</sup> Bearing this in mind, this chapter will analyse how the Irish wartime songs and music in this study spread around soldiering and civilian communities, creating a new traditional cultural output that linked to previous practice. Crucially, it will explore how these songs spread within and beyond Irish communities across the Union and Confederacy.

Irish wartime songs were part of publishers' commercial interest. The general popularity of Irish-related musical content helped these songs find a ready market. As Caroline Moseley has stated, 'the writing and publishing of music was not only an expression of patriotism. It was a business'.<sup>5</sup> It was one that printers exploited to profitable ends regardless of a song's subject matter and content, including the publication of songs that sang of an Irish-specific experience. Yet, it also reached into a wartime society already extremely familiar with general Irish lyrical sentiments and traditional tunes. In his analysis of antebellum Irish music, Robert R. Grimes noted that publishers like Oliver Ditson 'sought to tap the growing Catholic market' generated by migration and the establishment of Massachusetts Irish communities in the 1840s.<sup>6</sup> This developed interest in immigrant songs that gained popularity across wider non-Irish American society.

Oliver Ditson, along with fellow publishers across the country, expanded this market at the start of the Civil War, although they themselves often had no direct personal Irish connections. Profitability, sale and popularity of song subjects drove commercial interests. Indeed, by the time Ditson advertised his sale of *Cead Mille*

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<sup>4</sup> Steven H. Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 16.

<sup>5</sup> Caroline Moseley, "Irrepressible Conflict: Differences Between Northern and Southern Songs of the Civil War", *Journal of Popular Culture*, 25:2 (1991), 46.

<sup>6</sup> Robert R. Grimes, *How Shall We Sing in a Foreign Land? Music of Irish Catholic Immigrants in the Antebellum United States* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), x.



*Fealthe* in 1864, the song was just one of many similar pieces then circulating American society that sang of Irish wartime experience. The practice of Irish song and music dissemination through publishing houses via songsheets, songsters and musical scorebooks during the conflict, and through personal letters and newspaper publications, connects to overall arguments about how American these cultural products had become and what their distribution indicates about the place of Irish America Civil War music and song in the wartime cultural climate.

### **3.1 The Performative Culture of Irish American Civil War Song Production**

*The Irish Jaunting Car*'s diffusion during the American Civil War was universal on both sides of the sectional divide, but the majority of songs and musical production was more local. These compositions were published by Union and Confederate printing houses, appearing in newspapers and performed in city music halls, but the level of their widespread dissemination is harder to trace. That is not to limit their importance. Indeed the creation and sharing of musical and lyrical outputs added to the broader cultural impact and influence of Irish-related music and song production in the mid-nineteenth century. These are the ballads that carried the majority of Irish American Civil War song sentiments through American society. They were a fundamental part of articulating Irish views and experiences of the conflict.

The majority of the songs by and about the Irish American Civil War experience in this study do not have traceable origins beyond the information provided on songsheets, music scorebooks and in details provided by the publishers of songsters. In addition, documents about the performance, sound and production of wartime tunes and ballads are rare due to the overwhelming everyday practice of these cultural actions in the nineteenth century. Music and songs were so prolific in the American soundscape that their daily aural normality muted them in evidential

records. Nonetheless, it is still possible to trace some dissemination of broader wartime musicality and production, including that related to the Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting in the conflict.

Music and songs were an integral part to the soldiering experience during the American Civil War, a fact made clear by recent historical and musicological research. In his close study of the effect the conflict and music had on the soldiering and civilian communities during the 1863-1864 winter encampments along the Rapidan River in Virginia, James A. Davis has emphasized that musical melodies and ballad songs ‘permeated every Civil War camp and directly impacted every’ person who came in contact with both Union and Confederate armies. Their importance ‘cannot be overestimated, especially given the vast quantity...that was consumed’.<sup>7</sup> In the heightened atmosphere of warfare and front-line camps, pastimes such as singing, playing instruments, sharing old ballads and writing new songs were an important part of military life. As Cornelius argued, ‘in camp, soldiers played games, told stories, and made music’.<sup>8</sup> Those in Irish-dominated army regiments were no strangers to these pastimes.

From the beginning of their war service, Irish-born and descended soldiers engaged in the music and song culture of army life. This was a culture that had existed in the earliest days of Irish military service in the United States more broadly. Militia units originated in diaspora enclaves across the Northern and Southern states from the eighteenth century onwards, such as the Irish Volunteers, Hibernian Guards, Emerald Guards and many other Irish-named units. Most were based in urban centres, particularly in New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Louisiana, Georgia

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<sup>7</sup> James A. Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan: Civil War Soldiers, Music and Community During Winter Quarters, Virginia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 42.

<sup>8</sup> Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era*, 82.

and Virginia. In the early years of the war, many of these militias enlisted into the Union and Confederate Armies, were subsumed into larger companies and regiments, or, as in the case of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia, turned into a regiment and placed into a larger brigade structure, such as the Irish Brigade. Those already serving in these militias in 1861 remained for initial volunteer service, and joined for longer enlistment periods later in the war. Those in cities enlisted for several reasons, including out of loyalty and devotion to their respective Union and Confederate causes, desire to get fighting experience (especially if part of Irish nationalist groups), and, later in the war, in response to army draft policies. The main reason for enlistment often presented in Irish American Civil War studies, however, was that many of the diaspora's soldiers volunteered 'for economic need', with military service providing steady income for themselves and family provision.<sup>9</sup>

Exact reasons for enlistment, even in initial militia service days during the antebellum period, were not a main topic in contemporary ballads. Instead marching bands and soldiers themselves played and sang their own compositions, creating the military music noise that Davis and Cornelius have highlighted. In the autumn of 1862, Corporal John Dougherty of the Irish Brigade's 63<sup>rd</sup> New York Infantry gave his mother an account of the general singing atmosphere of the Union Army's Irish regiments:

The cheerful spirit of the Irish Brigade made the road seem short, the funny joke and merry laugh of the men at all times whether on the battlefield, on the march or in camp makes the Brigade the envy of the

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<sup>9</sup> Susannah J. Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 60. Both Ural and David Gleeson discuss the myriad of reasons for Irish enlistment in the Union and Confederate Armies, how they were recruited and how Irish-dominant militia units became part of regular military service during the American Civil War. See David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press).

rest of the army – they would go along in silence looking sad while the Irish men would be laughing and singing.<sup>10</sup>

This musical joviality manifested itself in countless Irish Brigade lyrics during the war. Dougherty described the environment in which songs about his fellow Irish-born and descended soldiers were given life. Around the same time, Derry-born William McCarter noted how the Irish Brigade's 116<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry began their journey to war 'accompanied by the voices of the regiment'. Military bands 'struck up the airs of *Jonny is Gone for a Soldier*, *The Star Spangled Banner* and *John Brown's Body Lies Moldering in the Grave, As We Go Marching On*', an amalgamation of Irish and American airs and ballads.<sup>11</sup>

As well as singing at 'spontaneous gatherings, or in organised groups' and on the march to boost morale, soldiers also sang in what Davis has called 'concert-like situations'.<sup>12</sup> In his 1863 prison memoir, the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia Irish-born Colonel Michael Corcoran recounted how his fellow First Battle of Bull Run prisoners of war – mostly high-ranking Union officers including those from Irish unit captured alongside him during the conflict's first engagement in July 1861 – put on several 'concerts' for their Confederate captors in various holdings in the Southern states to pass the time. On one occasion in October 1861, Corcoran described:

The audience of several Confederate officers...seemed highly delighted with the performance, until, in grand strains, we gave them *Hail Columbia*...Desiring to give them a full dose of Union melody, we immediately, upon the conclusion of the song, struck up, *Columbia, Gem of the Ocean*. This forced one or two of them to excuse themselves very suddenly on important duties, and, by the time we got

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<sup>10</sup> John Dougherty to Ann Dougherty, 4 September 1862, Application WC93207 in the Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Civil War Veterans, F3.

<sup>11</sup> William McCarter, *My Life in the Irish Brigade: The Civil War Memoirs of Private William McCarter, 116<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry*, ed. Kevin O'Brien (De Capo Press, 2003), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 53.

to the middle verse of *The Star Spangled Banner*, only a solitary one of them remained...A rebel fears the stirring notes of *The Star Spangled Banner*.<sup>13</sup>

Corcoran's account of using pro-Union songs to tease secessionists was part of what McWhirter has noted as the rapid increase in 'reverence for them' at the beginning of the war as Confederates rejected pre-war national songs such as *The Star Spangled Banner*.<sup>14</sup> However, this Union and Confederate American anthem adoption and abandonment was not clear-cut. Several weeks after the concert performance above, Corcoran moved to prison in Columbia, South Carolina. On the journey there, he recounted another attempt by his fellow officers to goad the Confederates through the use of American Union anthems, using song as a weapon. He commented that when 'we came in sight of the city...the leading spirits struck up the noble air of *Hail Columbia*...Every man lent the aid of his lungs to send it up to as high a pitch as possible'. The city's residents did not mind this musical form of fighting. Corcoran noted that 'a large number of them, seeing the point, laughed themselves into a good humour over it'.<sup>15</sup>

Corcoran's Confederate-taunting concerts were similar to those recalled in another fellow prisoner-of-war account. Non-Irish Missouri Union officer William Rogers recounted how 'together with singing' time was passed in captivity by 'giving concerts every evening. We had several good singers, who made quite enjoyable music'. They also performed to their Confederate prison guards who:

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Corcoran, *The Captivity of General Corcoran: The Only Authentic and Reliable Narrative of the Trials and Sufferings Endured, During his Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Richmond and Other Southern Cities, by Brigadier-General Michael Corcoran, the Hero of Bull Run* (Philadelphia: Barclay & Co, 1864), 65. This passage was in a section of Corcoran's account that copied his short-lived prison diary, 16 October 1861.

<sup>14</sup> McWhirter, *Battle Hymns*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Corcoran, *Captivity of General Corcoran*, 93. Corcoran's role in Irish wartime balladry will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Seemed to like our army songs as well as we did. No matter how hard the words hit them they would applaud and called for the *Jubilee, Star Spangled Banner, Red, White and Blue*, and we used to sing *Rally round the flag, boys*, putting unnecessary emphasis on ‘Down with the traitor and up with the star’.<sup>16</sup>

Whether Rogers’ singing concerts were influenced by a particular Irish presence amongst the prison guards is unknown, but his account makes mention of ‘a burly Irishman’ jailer that the Missouri soldier wrote about fondly. During the 1863 ‘New Year spree’, this particular Irish Confederate guard gave the Union soldiers extra food and supplies to celebrate the festive season and ‘concocted a beverage which we called egg-nog’. As a result, the prisoners ‘began to dance, sing, and get joyfully drunk’.<sup>17</sup>

Prison concerts accounts such as Rogers’ and Corcoran’s bear similarity to numerous reports across battlefields of military bands and soldiers sharing their respective songs through musical engagements. By comparison, fewer reports note an equivalent concert practice where Irish musical productions were also heard. Occasionally in times of reduced fighting or in winter quarters, military and civilian bands and performance troupes would entertain soldiers. In March 1863, ‘the Thespians of the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment’ performed for the 44<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Infantry, according to a letter from the latter’s Corporal Zenas T. Haines. The military actors ‘fitted up a little theatre, and furnished it with an act drop, scenery &c, of their own painting’, thus created a military music hall environment to perform *The Irish Tutor* and *Michael Earle*. Both pieces were rooted in Irish music, folk song and stage traditions; the former reappeared in newspapers adverts during and after the war

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<sup>16</sup> William H. Rogers, *The Great Civil War – William H. Rogers’s Personal Experiences* (Boston: Bivouac, 1888), 9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

promoting performances across the country in local theatres. Its dissemination into popular culture provides yet another example of the Irish influence on American musical theatre and song. Haines makes no mention of the performers' nationalities, but given the strong connection between the diaspora and Massachusetts there would have been Irish-born and descended soldiers in both the 27<sup>th</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts acting troupe and the audience.<sup>18</sup>

Singing on marches and military concert-like performances on front-line and in prisoner-of-war environments were essentially about community morale. They were public displays of engagement with musical military culture. Performances could also be heard and found around more private campfire settings as soldiers gathered to sing, share, play and create the music and ballads of the American Civil War. This environment generated intimate connections to the lyrics being articulated, and strengthened soldiering identity and community, especially in ethnic regiments. In John G. Jones's case, his fellow Wisconsin Welsh soldiers maintained Celtic bardic tradition by having 'a sing-song every night'.<sup>19</sup> He also noted that 'there is much singing here with all these Welshmen' in camp.<sup>20</sup> This impression could likewise be applied to his fellow Irish brethren. In rare accounts of Irish-born and descended soldiers engaging with particular musical environments, commentary was reflective and emotional. Such moments revealed the power music and song could have in these settings. In his memoir, Corcoran recounted the occasions when he and his fellow prisoners:

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<sup>18</sup> Zenas T. Haines, 21 March 1863, in *Letters from the Forty-Fourth Regiment M.V.M.: A Record of the Experience of a Nine Months' Regiment in the Department of North Carolina in 1862-1863* (Boston: *The Herald*, 1863). Haines also noted: 'the musical world will be glad to know that the organs of our principal singers are as yet unaffected by the severe trials of picket duty: a fact the more noticeable, perhaps, considering that those organs have not been lubricated with whiskey rations from first to last of our severe trials as soldiers', 87-88.

<sup>19</sup> John G. Jones to his parents, 24 October 1862, in *Wales and the American Civil War*, ed. Clare Taylor (Aberystwyth, 1972), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Jones to his parents, 12 October 1862, *Ibid.*, 8.

Would make the room in which we were confined ring again with our swelling choruses. *Home, Sweet Home* was our favourite and most frequent song; and I have seen the tears coursing down the cheeks of every man...whenever it was sung. These touching moments were soon succeeded by those in which martial airs awoke the sterner qualities of our hearts.<sup>21</sup>

Oftentimes these particular campfire-singing displays included more than just the voice, as musical instruments found their way to the frontline with the men who went to fight. Irish-born and descended soldiers were great proponents of this particular musical performance aspect. When the Irish Brigade's contemporary historian Captain David Power Conyngham narrated the first Union Army Christmas Eve celebrations of the Brigade's 63<sup>rd</sup>, 69<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> New York regiments in 1861, he included a passage painting the singing scene at the end of the day:

Seated near the fire was Johnny Flaherty, discoursing sweet music from his violin. Johnny hailed from Boston; was a musical genius, in his way, and though only fourteen years of age, could play on the bagpipes, piano, and Heaven knows how many other instruments; beside him sat his father, fingering the chanter of a bagpipe in elegant style.<sup>22</sup>

The presence of such instruments, although seemingly impractical in theatres of war, was commonplace. As Davis has highlighted, 'many enlisted men were talented instrumentalists who bought their instruments with them on campaign' and they often 'took advantage of extended encampment to purchase instruments and replace parts or to request that instruments be sent from home'.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Corcoran, *Captivity of General Corcoran*, 30.

<sup>22</sup> David Power Conyngham, *The Irish Brigade and its Campaigns* (Glasgow: Cameron & Ferguson, 1868), 39.

<sup>23</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 54-56.



Two specific Irish-born and descended soldier examples support Davis's argument. In April 1863, Patrick Kinnane, a second generation soldier in the 155<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry, part of Corcoran's Legion, wrote to his sister Elizabeth about using some of his army earnings to buy a fiddle, reporting that he had \$10 to pay for it. He implored his sister to understand the necessary expense, stating that he hoped she would not 'think I am doing wrong in buying the fiddle...I am sure it is a good bargain'. Kinnane had bought it from a fellow musician, 'as honest a man as there is in the Legion', most likely a fellow Irish New Yorker given the unit's ethnic identity. The sale was sweetened by extras that were part of the deal, including 'the little things such as tuning forks, two bows' and, in an example of musical dissemination, a 'music book' with melody scores to play. Kinnane seemed delighted by the items, stating that they made the sale 'worth the money'.<sup>24</sup> By comparison, County Galway-born Patrick Kelly asked for music, songs and instruments to be sent to him on the front-line instead of making direct purchases himself. In one letter to his parents in January 1862, after saying that he did not 'need much at present', he requested them to send 'a guitar and some song books if you can get the guitar cheap'. He promised to send \$20 'if we get paid' to cover the cost.<sup>25</sup>

Sometimes only an instrument was needed to awaken the musical lyricism and singing spirit instilled in the Irish of the Union and Confederate armies. In his postbellum recollections, the Irish Brigade chaplain Reverend William Corby made no reference to the singing culture of soldiers under his religious care, save for passing mention of music at Mass services. However, there was one section of his

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<sup>24</sup> Patrick Kinnane to Elizabeth Kinnane, 10 April 1863. Kinnane and his sister played fiddles at antebellum dances. Application WC75830 in the Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Civil War Veterans, F3.

<sup>25</sup> Patrick Kelly to his parents, 19 January 1862, quoted by Damian Shiels, *The Forgotten Irish: Irish Experiences in America*, (Dublin: History Press, 2016) 119.

account, describing the twilight scene in camp by Harpers Ferry in the late autumn of 1862, where a ‘bugler delighted us by sounding clear notes which reverberated through the gulches of the mountains for miles’. In this aural climate, Corby noted that soldiers:

Listened, late in the calm evening, seated around our campfires, a pathetic feeling crept over us...First came flashing through our minds the poor dead companions we had left behind in their cold graves at Antietam. Then, as the scene of the late terrible conflict faded from our minds, while still under the fascinating charm of the clear bugle notes...All the vicissitudes of life passed in review before our minds...as the bugle tune died before softly in the distant hollows of the mountains.<sup>26</sup>

Corby’s account bears striking similarity to a passage in McCarter’s wartime memoirs where he too described, in almost identical lyrical rhetoric, the power hearing music could have on listeners. McCarter too revealed the impact it had on those fighting in the conflict. He detailed one bugle player’s ‘truly wonderful and grand’ performance:

Echoing from hill to hill for miles around. But my powers to do justice in describing these meetings and their effects upon the troops come far short of what is necessary. I may, however, note that they were a source of much comfort and encouragement to myself and others.<sup>27</sup>

Corby and McCarter’s descriptions provide a sense of the climate into which song singing, sharing and writing would occur in military settings, helping soldiers learn new ballads and familiarising themselves with older airs and new wartime productions. When John G. Jones discussed the nightly campfire singsongs in his

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<sup>26</sup> William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years in the Famous Irish Brigade* (Chicago: La Monte, 1893), 116-117.

<sup>27</sup> McCarter, *Life in the Irish Brigade*, 50.

letters, he informed his parents that such regular practice would mean he and his fellow Welsh soldiers ‘will have learnt to sing perfectly by the time we come home, if we live till then’. Jones thus implied the ballads learnt in the camp would disseminate back to the home-front through the soldiers’ own oral cultural practice.<sup>28</sup> Michael Corcoran also recounted more individual fireside singing recitals, including one brief wartime memoir passage about a Lieutenant Isaac Hart of Indiana. Hart was described as being ‘not only a beautiful singer, but also a capital poet, [who] composed several first-rate songs, in which we all used to join in, to the extent of our musical abilities’.<sup>29</sup> Corcoran was being modest here, as the Irishman was actually very musically literate.

Indeed, both Corcoran’s memoir and private correspondence are full of song references. He often paraphrased lyrics in his writings to add to his already poetic style of phrase. In one letter to New York Irish American Judge Charles P. Daly he began by noting that ‘all is now quiet in this locality’ around his camp in Suffolk, Virginia, in May 1863. This is a paraphrased embellishment of the popular wartime song *All Quiet Along the Potomac*.<sup>30</sup> William McCarter also engaged in this lyrical paraphrasing when relating the 116<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania’s journey to the South: ‘after the songs’ of patriotism and Union commitment were played and sung, ‘three rousing

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<sup>28</sup> Jones to his parents, 24 October 1861, *Wales and the American Civil War*, 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> Corcoran, *Captivity of General Corcoran*, 30.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Corcoran to Charles P. Daly, 13 May 1863, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL. Corcoran’s counterpart Thomas Francis Meagher did not show the same lyrical style in his speeches and writings. That is not to say he was not musical: during his time as a clarinet player in the Stonyhurst College orchestra he refused to ‘sound a note of praise for England’s victory’ at the school’s annual Battle of Waterloo commemoration, David Knight, “Thomas Francis Meagher: His Stonyhurst Years”, *Decis: Journal of the Waterford Archaeological and Historical Society*, 59 (2012). As a Young Irelander Meagher wrote poetry compositions, such as *Prison Thoughts*, Arthur Griffith, ed., *Meagher of the Sword: Speeches of Thomas Francis Meagher in Ireland, 1846-1848* (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1916), 330-333. When compared to Corcoran, however, there is no indication Meagher engaged with American Civil War song and music culture.

cheers were given for Philadelphia and the girls we left behind us'.<sup>31</sup> This again was a reference to the traditional *The Girl I Left Behind* Irish ballad.

Other Irish soldiers were more direct in relating the songs they knew and were singing. Patrick Kelly's letters reveal a keen sense of musical awareness and interest, as demonstrated by his guitar request. He also made reference to songs being sung in camp, commenting in one letter how he 'will shoot Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree' if given the chance, a direct quote from a version of the universally popular Union song *John Brown's Body*.<sup>32</sup> Yet, while Kelly showed familiarity of contemporary American wartime ballads, his letters revealed a complex relationship to the traditional songs of his Irish past. At one point he asked for a specific song: 'I want Father the next letter he writes to write of the song called *Mary Le More* I want to learn it'.<sup>33</sup> This was an eviction song from the British Isles and Ireland in the late 1840s, though its precise origin is unknown.<sup>34</sup> It would appear a version of the ballad had Irish connections. Kelly gave no indication as to why he wanted to know this particular ballad, but as his correspondence details regular singing amongst his fellow Irish soldiers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, he possibly heard them performing it around the campfire. Why these soldiers did not teach the song to him is unclear. Through his request, Kelly revealed a gap in his transnational folk music knowledge that was being expanded during his American Civil War experience.

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<sup>31</sup> McCarter, *Life in the Irish Brigade*, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Kelly to his parents, 15 January 1862, quoted by Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 118. William McCarter also referred to marching Irish soldiers singing *John Brown's Body*, in *Life in the Irish Brigade*, 57-58.

<sup>33</sup> Kelly to his parents, 27 November 1862, quoted by Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 122. Given the letter's date, Kelly likely heard the song during 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Thanksgiving commemorations.

<sup>34</sup> *Mary Le More* (Glasgow: Robert McIntosh, c.1849). Shiels suggests *Mary Le More* was an 1840s Irish eviction song, *Forgotten Irish*, 124. However, Scottish broadside copies reveal lyrical origins in Liverpool, home to sizeable Irish and Ulster-Scots communities in the mid-nineteenth century, "*Mary Le More* Commentary", NLS, <http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/16531>.

Although just one example, Kelly throws up an anomaly in the dissemination of Irish tunes within the diaspora itself. Davis has argued that ‘all soldiers and civilians carried with them a resonance of their past communities’, particularly in relation to immigrant groups whose ethnicity ‘was celebrated through their musical choices’. ‘Most soldiers sang from memory’, and, as already argued, carried and reinforced their traditional songs and airs through emigration and dissemination.<sup>35</sup> This is in line with Hugh Shields’ argument that many Irish songs during the antebellum period had ‘been preserved...[by] first or second-generation Irish emigrants’. Kelly’s specific example challenges this however, but supports a crucial caveat Shields also makes. He argues that the preservation of Irish songs and music could have occurred ‘before or after emigrating’, which stresses the assessment that not all traditional ballads were necessarily known in Ireland before migrating.<sup>36</sup> Instead, they were learnt through dissemination in the migrant community. Kelly was in his early twenties when he enlisted in the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, having immigrated to Boston with his parents as a young boy during the peak of the Great Famine migration.<sup>37</sup> Kelly’s cultural memory of Irish songs was thus formed, for the most part, in the United States through repeated family stories, memories and shared song dissemination and performances.

Whilst Patrick Kelly was asking for songs to be sent to him from the home-front, one of his 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts compatriots reversed this song-sharing process later in the war by sending a ballad to those at home. Daniel Crowley, originally from Cork, served with the regiment in 1864 and kept a regular correspondence with his friend Cornelius Flynn in their Massachusetts hometown of Marlboro (Marlborough).

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<sup>35</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 45; 61-62.

<sup>36</sup> Hugh Shields, *Narrative Singing in Ireland: Lays, Ballads, Come-All-Yes and Other Songs* (Blackrock: Irish Academic press, 1993), 52.

<sup>37</sup> Shiels, *Forgotten Irish*, 117.

Crowley never made any reference, even in passing, to the singing spirit of the Union Army and Irish Brigade in which he served. However, he did engage with a specific form of ballad dissemination rarely seen in existing sources. On 6 December 1864, Crowley's letter to Flynn was written on song stationary. In other words, the paper contained a printed song. It was a four-page elaborate piece of writing material, with a printed copy of *Disbanded O!* on the first sheet. The song was a Union ballad about 'a band of Volunteers' who would 'join in heart and hand, and go down to Dixie's Land' to fight the Confederacy, set to a variant tune of *Yankee Doodle*. Publication details on the song page itself reveal it was produced in Washington D.C., with an added note about 'packages sent by mail, paid post, to any part of the Army of United States'. This information was not something found on single-page songsheets, suggesting that Crowley's letter paper was made specifically as special illustrated writing paper for soldiers and civilians. Davis has highlighted that 'some publishers produced stationery with song lyrics on the first or last page' like Crowley's example. Such items provided 'a creative means of marketing that ensured some exchange of pieces between front and home'.<sup>38</sup> Crowley made no allusion as to why he chose to write on this special paper, save for commenting above the lyrics 'A. and W. would you like to be Disbanded O!'.<sup>39</sup>

*Disbanded O!* was a particular printed song circulation sent by Crowley. At the same time, soldiers also sent home their own written compositions, creating a two-way form of lyrical distribution between the front-line and home-front. Many remained on the pages of private correspondence. John G. Jones informed his parents that he 'sent two songs – the work of a boy from the 18<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin' in previous

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<sup>38</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 61-62.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Crowley to Cornelius Flynn, 6 December 1864, Daniel Crowley Letters to Cornelius Flynn, BA. Crowley possibly gifted the war ballad to his friend around the Thanksgiving/Christmas period.

correspondence to his family.<sup>40</sup> Some songs found their way ultimately to printing houses and were published on songsheets and in songsters that then spread these compositions through society. One Irish-born soldier took his song writing dissemination even further. County-Meath native Charles Graham Halpine was the most prolific Irish wartime lyricist and poet in America, famed for his satirical and comic productions penned by his fictional creation, Private Miles O'Reilly. His cultural outputs reached through the diaspora and Union American society alike. Halpine's works originated in military settings. He made use of his pre-war journalist contacts to ensure their publication, leading to the first Miles O'Reilly appearance in the *New York Herald* in September 1863. The newspaper would print the rest of his works for the remainder of the war. When they were collated into *The Life and Adventures of Private Miles O'Reilly* in 1864 the book noted the stories had come 'from the authentic records of the *New York Herald*', furthering their dissemination and the myth that O'Reilly was one of their wartime correspondents.<sup>41</sup>

Newspapers in both the Union and Confederate states would at times print poems and songs, including popular wartime anthems such as *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* and *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, as well as more individual pieces sent to editors from soldiers and civilians alike. Newspapers were also a primary way for the Irish diaspora to express their lyrical views and sentiments about the Civil War. *The Irish-American*, *The Pilot*, numerous state and regional newspapers all published news and opinion pieces aimed directly at the diaspora, particularly in the Irish urban enclaves

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<sup>40</sup> Jones to his parents, 27 August 1863, *Wales and the American Civil War*, 44.

<sup>41</sup> Charles Graham Halpine, *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly [Pseud.], 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New York Volunteers, with Comic Illustrations by Mullen, from the Authentic Records of the 'New York Herald'* (New York: Carleton, 1864). Halpine also asked his wife Margaret 'to send him volumes of Irish poems and ballads' for performances and to aid his own lyrical productions, William Hanchett, *Irish: Charles Graham Halpine in Civil War America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970) 46.

of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago. During the conflict, articles, opinion pieces, editorials and reports of public speeches made by leading diaspora figures presented both pro-and anti-wartime sentiments and politics, reflecting myriad and changing attitudes as the war went on, similar to broader newspaper views such as those seen in *The New York Times* and *New York Herald* that were targeted at audiences across the country. Most newspapers in the mid-nineteenth century were based in New York and generated news from the region that then spread through the United States., which added to the New York-centric focus of an Irish American newspaper voice. In relation to promoting and disseminating Irish American Civil War song culture and lyrical sentiments, newspapers – both produced specially for the diaspora and more general productions – often included sections where ballad verse, song lyrics (occasionally with reference to a musical air) and poems were printed.

These included compositions sent to *The Irish-American*, the main broadsheet for the largest group of Irish-born and descended residents of New York, though its reach went beyond the city and the state. It also circulated within the Irish regiments of the Union Army. Most of the works were forms of poetry sent from readers in the home-front, but those fighting also sent their own ballad verses. Soldier Richard Oulahan forwarded his *Camp Song of the Sixty-Ninth* to the newspaper for publication on 15 June 1861, in the very early days of the conflict as the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia, to whom the piece was dedicated, mobilized.<sup>42</sup> Oulahan's composition corresponds with the earliest pre-First Battle of Bull Run songsheets about the Irish unit. Five months later, Thomas J. MacEvily submitted *War Song of the Irish Brigade* in November 1861, commemorating the Irish Brigade's foundation. The verses celebrated New York's three regimental contributions to the Brigade. Lyrics

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<sup>42</sup> *Camp Song of the Sixty-Ninth*, Richard Oulahan, in *The Irish-American* (New York), 15 June 1861.



emphasised their Union Army loyalty and an additional musical note stated the words were to be sung to *The Star Spangled Banner*.<sup>43</sup> Although Oulahan and MacEvily's compositions were sent to a specific Irish diaspora newspaper, and New York-centric in their focus, both examples show more individual contributions to the Irish American wartime song writing milieu.

Not all Irish-related wartime song submissions made it to print. In April 1864, *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* recounted 'the following proposal to purchase' a ballad 'which comes from Canada'. The brief article explained how 'an officer of the regular army, Lieutenant Manus, of the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry', then stationed in Nebraska Territory, had posted sections of a lyrical poem he had written to the newspaper in the hope the editor would buy the full piece for subsequent publication. *Harper's* replied: 'we decline; but we take the liberty of publishing the sample'. The publication thereby printed the four verses at no cost. The second, seventh, twelfth and sixteenth verses appeared in the article, which sang of Michael Corcoran's leadership of his New York regimental Legion. Manus wrote his composition after the famed Irish general's death in December 1863. Although described as 'Poetry Being verses', given how many cultural productions there were about Corcoran in the war it is possible Manus's piece could be set to music. It is interesting in this example to trace an editorial choice halting the publication of Irish American Civil War lyrical writing, especially one centred on a popular figure who traversed both Irish and American society.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *War Song of the Irish Brigade*, Thomas J. MacEvily, in *Irish-American*, 30 November 1861. No military records exist for MacEvily, suggesting home-front origins.

<sup>44</sup> 'Editor's Drawer', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, April 1864 (New York). Lieutenant Manus's composition title was *A Copy of Four Verses of Poetry Being Verses... Composed On The Pedigree – Emigration and Military-Career Of, Brigadier General Corcoran, Up to the Time That He Left New York the Second Time for the Battlefield*. The fact one stanza was from the sixteenth verse provides a reason why the newspaper turned Manus down – wartime lyrical productions were rarely that long.

Alongside wartime newspaper publication, songs also circulated from the front-line via oral culture transmission in home-front performance settings. This form of dissemination is the hardest to trace because of the predominance of music and song in American nineteenth century everyday life. Nevertheless, there are hints of this culture in some Irish-related home-front sources, such as the diary of Maria Lydig Daly, the German-descended wife of second generation Irish American Judge Charles P. Daly, an ardent supporter of the Irish Brigade and New York's Irish diaspora. The Dalys were also no strangers to engaging with contemporary song writing culture. In 1858, Judge Daly received a two-page handwritten, colour illustrated personal song about New York City's Irish American Democratic politics.<sup>45</sup> During the war itself, Dublin-born family friend, former Young Irelander, Fenian and poet John Savage wrote to the Dalys while serving with the 69<sup>th</sup> New York. In one letter he added, 'I enclose a few copies of *The Starry Flag*' which he had written, disseminating the ballad to the home-front via the couple.<sup>46</sup> Several months previously, Maria Daly recorded Savage 'sang for us, after dinner' not long after his regiment fought at the First Battle of Bull Run. His performance included what she described as 'the war song of the 69<sup>th</sup> *The Flag of Our Country Forever*, which [Savage] composed himself and set to the tune of *Dixieland*', a variant of *Dixie*.<sup>47</sup>

Savage returned to the Dalys in autumn 1861 and sang again, this time to some of their guests. Maria made no mention in her diary about what he performed, other than noting how it 'amused [the gathered party] very much...we had quite a pleasant evening' of music, songs and 'some ice cream and cake', a civilised New

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<sup>45</sup> *Campaign Song of the Democracy!* Charles Byrne, 1858.

<sup>46</sup> John Savage to Charles P. Daly, 10 September 1861, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

<sup>47</sup> Maria Lydig Daly, 28 July 1861, *Diary of a Union Lady, 1861-1865*, ed. Harold Earl Hammond (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 43. Savage produced Irish nationalist poems prior to emigrating in 1848 and continued doing so in America.

York form of wartime entertainment.<sup>48</sup> Savage appeared in Maria's diary throughout the course of war, with the Irish nationalist sending her 'a little volume...of his poems, dedicated to the Judge' as a New Year's gift in 1864.<sup>49</sup> Her diary entries are exceptional reports of simultaneous Irish American Civil War song dissemination, John Savage's American cultural output, and the intimate and personal nature of ballad sharing on occasion.

Maria Daly was someone immersed in contemporary classical, operatic, religious and traditional musical culture. Her writings demonstrated a keen knowledge of melodies and ballads emanating from the conflict. In one particular passage of her diary, she described her morning walk 'up Broadway [when] the 56<sup>th</sup> New York passed me going to the seat of war'. She recalled how 'the men were singing all the way. It was most inspiring'.<sup>50</sup> New York's Irish regiments also inspired Maria. The Dalys served as patrons of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and were close acquaintances of Michael Corcoran. Indeed, the New York judge was instrumental in helping secure the Irish general's release from Confederate captivity. While Corcoran gathered soldiers for his Union Army command in autumn 1862, he invited the Dalys to his headquarters at Camp Scott on Staten Island. Maria recorded the visit's events, where they 'went to Corcoran's house, supped and passed the evening talking and singing songs until long after one' in the morning; 'we sang some comical songs and had a right merry evening in the General's room'.<sup>51</sup>

Clearly Corcoran, ever the musical performer, lost none of his singing passion exhibited in his prisoner-of-war days. Now returned from the South, one wonders whether he would have sung with the Dalys some of the songs that had been written

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<sup>48</sup> 17 October 1861, *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>49</sup> 2 January 1864, *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>50</sup> 7 November 1861, *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>51</sup> 13 October 1862, *Ibid.*, 186-187.

about him in his absence. Their wide distribution beyond the army, and his own musical interests, would have made Corcoran aware of the existence of these lyrical compositions. He was not, however, present for the initial performance of the first song about him produced after his captivity in July 1861. One of the only reported performances of a song by and about the Irish in the American Civil War was *Corcoran to His Regiment*, written to celebrate the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia's volunteering and fighting service at the start of the conflict. It sang of Corcoran's insistence that he would not be paroled to the Union. When publishing wholesaler Horace Partridge produced a songsheet copy of the ballad, a note was added under the title:

As sung at Jones' Wood, 29 August 1861, for the benefit of the widows and orphans of those of the 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment who fell at Bull-Run.<sup>52</sup>

The song sheet was a referring to a 'festival for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the soldiers' of the Irish 69<sup>th</sup> New York held at Jones's Wood on the Upper East Side of New York City a month after the fighting at Manassas. The gathering served as both a welfare fundraising event for the city's Irish diaspora and an early recruiting rally for the foundation of the Irish Brigade. The *New York Times* reported 'there was much music and dancing in all parts of the Garden', although it did not mention *Corcoran to His Regiment* directly.<sup>53</sup> Why the precise detail about the song's performance at this occasion was added to its song sheet is unclear, but it is interesting to note that Partridge was based in Boston, not New York. This reveals how Irish New York-centric songs spread through the American Union and played to

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<sup>52</sup> *Corcoran to His Regiment – Or 'I Would Not Take Parole'*, 'Words and Music by an Irishman' (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1861).

<sup>53</sup> "The Monster Festival: Aid for the Widows and Orphans of the Sixty-ninth Regiment", *The New York Times* (New York), 30 August 1861.

older traditional broadside news dissemination practices where added contextual details provided readers and performers with a more singing–news style approach that solely reprinting the lyrics.

Publishers were inconsistent in adding more general performance details to song sheets in much the same way that not all added a note about what melody air was meant to be used to accompany the lyrics. There were notations that, in the case of the latter, presupposed performers' own musical knowledge, and in the case of the former reveals songsheets were printed after the fact. In other words, the song was first performed and then set down onto song sheets and, more infrequently, in music scorebooks. Even so, it is possible to see some home-front performance dissemination of Irish American Civil War songs on a few songsheets. Details of specific people and recitals give indication of this process. For example, one songsheet copy of *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* produced by New York-based H. De Marsan in 1863 referred to the fact that it had been 'sung with great success by the Comic Vocalist of the day, Tony Pastor'.<sup>54</sup> This detail is absent on Horace Partridge's production of the same song, either indicating the latter was produced first, before Pastor sung the song, or a printing choice to omit the information. The comment illustrates the role musical halls played as a space for Civil War song distribution and how Irish songs and music continued to form the basis for entertainment.

As William H.A. Williams noted in his work on Irish popular comic songs in nineteenth and early twentieth century America, Irish tunes and ballads had long been performed in music halls and theatres across the country, providing an outlet for their dissemination. For a few successful writers and performers like Harry Macarthy and Tony Pastor, such entertainment locations provided a ready-made audience for new

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<sup>54</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863).

productions. During the Civil War itself, these venues helped propagate the new songs of the conflict, ranging from the big anthemic ballads to more specific thematic productions, including those, like *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade*, about the Irish wartime experience. Pastor himself had no direct Irish roots (his parents were Spanish and American-born) but he had strong connections to New York's Irish community. He started his life on stage working as child at P.T. Barnum's Museum, where, as mentioned, he would have known Macarthy, Charles Graham Halpine and Patrick Gilmore, and become familiar with the Irish musical lexicon in America. His first theatre, or 'opera-house' as it was sometimes described, was situated at 201 Bowery, close to the Five Points area of New York City and thus within communities with a large proportion of Irish-born and descended residents.<sup>55</sup>

After the war, Pastor established a theatre by Union Square, next to the political powerhouse Tammany Hall, which had close ties to the city's Irish population. Williams has highlighted that amongst Pastor's troupe 'were Irish-American performers', similar to fellow entertainer Harry Pell who toured America and Europe with Irish musicians in the same period. Pastor wrote and performed wartime and Irish ballads regularly himself, as Irish Civil War songsheets show. Through the 1860s 'he had a number of Irish songs in his repertory, praising participation in the Civil War and decrying no-Irish-need-apply prejudice'.<sup>56</sup>

As much as they appealed to audiences' popular cultural music tastes, Pastor's close connections to Irish music and song during the war were also borne from

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<sup>55</sup> See Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th Century New York City Neighbourhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

<sup>56</sup> William H.A. Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 118-119. Pastor also produced a number of songster collections, including *Tony Pastor's Irish Comic Songster* (New York, Dick & Fitzgerald, c.1860s).

economic reasons. In this he echoed the way music publishing and printing houses produced and circulated wartime songs about Irish-born and descended soldiers' experiences and Irish sentiments across the Union and Confederate states; it was part of an extension of general antebellum and postbellum Irish traditional folk song and music inventories. Christian McWhirter has pointed out that 'most published pieces did not sell many copies but almost any song could find a market somewhere'. The fact that several Irish American Civil War songs were reprinted on songsheets more than once by the same publisher, or by different publishers, highlights an extensive distribution of sales. Furthermore, as McWhirter has rightly argued, 'sheet music sales did not fully measure a song's popularity'.<sup>57</sup> Those statistics cannot be known. What is crucial is that at least 150 songsheets, songsters and scorebooks referring to the Irish in the American Civil War era were deemed profitable and popular enough for publication.

### **3.2 The Publication of Irish American Civil War Songs**

The vast majority of Irish American Civil War songs produced in the Union states originated from a core group of publishers in New York, Boston and, to a lesser extent, Philadelphia, all home to long-established printing businesses. H. De Marsan and James Wrigley in New York City, and Oliver Ditson and Horace Partridge in Boston, printed the bulk of Irish-related songs in this study. Marsan was 'the principal publisher of the penny sheets' according to Alfred M. Williams' late nineteenth century retrospective on Civil War folk music. Marsan had 'almost a monopoly of the trade' printing 'almost everything that was singable, old Revolutionary ballads, English naval songs...as well as Ethiopian melodies [minstrel songs]' and original ballads, including wartime productions and, of course, songs pertaining to the Irish in

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<sup>57</sup> McWhirter, *Battle Hymns*, 16; 2.

the war.<sup>58</sup> The successful publisher Charles Magnus printed others. He was ‘the most prolific...in terms of both variety of design and quantity’ of songsheets, lithographs, envelopes and other paper items.<sup>59</sup>

For printers such as Magnus and Wrigley, songsheets were just one of the items they sold. Wrigley’s productions included details at the bottom that described him as ‘Publisher, of Songs, Ballads, and Toy Books’.<sup>60</sup> Ditson, as mentioned, had other publishing outputs during the war such as *Dwight’s Journal of Music*. Partridge was even more extensive as an ‘Importer, Wholesaler and Retail Dealer’ who sold wartime songs alongside ‘Fancy Goods, Toys, Watches, Jewelry, Yankee Notions, &c.’<sup>61</sup> Yet, amongst all their products were also the songs and sheet music relating to the Irish experience of the war. Publishers, through their own commercial choice to print such lyrics and musical scores, played a substantial role in ensuring Irish American Civil War song dissemination. They were the middlemen of the process whose role and symbiotic relationship to wartime ballad publication and propagation is in need of its own detailed study. It was through these printing houses and publishers that Irish-related songs found their American voice.

None of the major publishers of Irish American Civil War songs and music had any personal ties to their cities’ Irish communities. Ditson, Partridge, Magnus and Marsan were not part of the Irish American diaspora, although they resided in the ethnic group’s two largest demographic areas of New York and Boston.<sup>62</sup> They also had subsidiary printing houses in other cities, as was common amongst Union and

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<sup>58</sup> Alfred M. Williams, “Folk-Songs of the Civil War”, *The Journal of American Folklore*, 5:19 (October-December 1892), 268.

<sup>59</sup> Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 14; 60.

<sup>60</sup> *Battle of Bull Run*, F. Collins (New York: J. Wrigley, 1861).

<sup>61</sup> *Free and Easy of Our Union!* (Boston: Horace Partridge. 1861).

<sup>62</sup> Magnus migrated from Germany in the 1840s, Ditson’s family had Scottish roots but the printer was born in Boston, and Partridge also came from Massachusetts. Marsan’s biographical details are unknown.



Confederate publishers in the nineteenth century. Magnus, for instance, had offices in New York and Washington D.C. Partridge, as a wholesaler, also bought much of the printed stock Ditson published only a few hundred yards away, thus creating a further stream of material culture dissemination within Boston, while Magnus and Marsan's offices were both on Chatham Street in New York, home to a number of stationers and printers who would have been aware of mutual business trends. There was a similar situation in Augusta, Georgia and in Richmond, Virginia, where a number of Confederate printing houses were all based in close proximity. This created centres of wartime song and music cultural output where Irish-related items, tapping into an already popular genre, found a commercial marketplace. This cultural marketplace aided their circulation into, and through wartime society.

It is worth stressing that the archival survival of songsheets in particular presents the dissemination of a false record. Not all songs produced during the Civil War, including those relating to the Irish conflict experience, were written down of course. Not all written were printed, and on the occasion that they were, not all copies were exactly alike. Verses and lyrics could alter and different publishers created different songsheet productions. Although core lyrical sentiments remained, songsheet broadsides were ephemeral by nature. The reverse side of dissemination culture was the ultimate fact that printed songsheets were rarely saved by those who printed and purchased them. Scores with the lyrics and music were often kept because of their use in home settings for voice, pianoforte and instrumental playing, though they too had a transient quality. By comparison, both soldiers and civilians kept songsters during the war. These played a final important role in a more sweeping dissemination of Irish-related songs during the Civil War era through both Union and Confederate societies.

Small, pocket-sized, sometimes barely bigger than a palm-hand, songsters form their own particular contributions to the war's musical culture through their engraining of lyrics in printed book form. They were valued items for consumers. Both Patrick Kelly and Patrick Kinnane made reference to receiving songster books from the home-front and through musical purchases. McWhirter has highlighted how 'soldiers treasured their songbooks' along with 'other sources of music they could procure'.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, soldiers took particular care of these items as prized wartime mementoes. In one copy of the *Virginian Songster*, a Confederate 3<sup>rd</sup> Missouri Infantry soldier wrote in pencil on the verso of the title cover noting its purchase on 1 August 1863. He added the details: 'Bought this Book at Augusta Georgia while on my way to Va. [Virginia].' He also adapted the songbook by pasting two songsheets to the insides of the outer cover, thus expanding its ballad repertoire. One of these additions was a copy of *The Irishman's Shanty*.<sup>64</sup>

Even though songster titles such as *The Camp-Fire Songster* implied a military setting for song dissemination – a notion reinforced by the book's cover illustration depicting soldiers gathering around a campfire – publishers were aware of their domestic popularity. They appealed to the idea of bringing war culture into the home parlour. *Dwight's Journal of Music* advertised '*Camp Songs*...a collection of all the popular National songs' at the start of wartime volunteer mobilisation. The songster would 'serve to enliven the soldier's life'. Yet, it would also 'prove a source of much enjoyment and recreation to all into whose hands it may fall'.<sup>65</sup> This included those on the home-front who purchased them, or received them from soldiers sending them to families along with their own lyrical and musical compositions. Three years

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<sup>63</sup> McWhirter, *Battle Hymns*, 121.

<sup>64</sup> *Virginia Songster* (Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1863).

<sup>65</sup> *Camp Songs* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 8 June 1861.

into the war, *Dwight's* printed another advert that reiterated the universal appeal of songbook collections when advertising *War Songs for Freeman*, reportedly 'just the book for soldiers in their tents, and for everyone who wishes to sing on war topics'.<sup>66</sup> That 'everyone' would have incorporated Irish-born and descended men and women.

Songsters, moreover, provided a way of ensuring even fleeting compositions, especially from the soldiers themselves, could be saved for cultural posterity. Dissemination of song lyrics to and from the home-front ensured personal and cultural connections were maintained. New adaptations and lyrical writings expanded an already noisy marketplace. This process can be seen through the way songsters traced the impact of specific Irish-related wartime songs. For example, one *Hopkins's New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* contained the ballad *Song for the Irish Brigade* (1861). Its verses sang of Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting in the Confederate Army and their martial emulation of previous Irish service in foreign armies, as well as providing a subtle criticism of their official Union Army Irish Brigade opponents.<sup>67</sup> The song's presence in a New Orleans-published songster should not be surprising as all publishers included productions that had regional connections, such as *New Orleans Song of the Times* (c.1861), a local adaptation of the Southern ballad *Song of the Times*. Hopkins included both alongside *Song for the Irish Brigade*.<sup>68</sup> As already mentioned, Hopkins included traditional Irish ballads like *Limerick Races* and *The Irishman's Shanty* in his publications. Given that many of the Confederacy's Irish-born and descended soldiers resided in the region and served in Louisianan regiments, the inclusion of *Song for the Irish Brigade* provided a dual acknowledgment of their military and cultural contributions. The ballad appealed to

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<sup>66</sup> *War Songs for Freeman* Advertisement, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 5 March 1864.

<sup>67</sup> *Song for the Irish Brigade*, in *Hopkins's New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* (New Orleans: Hopkins, c.1861), 14-15.

<sup>68</sup> *New Orleans Song of the Times*, *Ibid.*, 15-16; *Song of the Times*, *Ibid.*, 4-5.

Louisiana's Irish fighters, and to wider Confederate society already familiar with Irish tunes and lyrics.

Equally the eighth edition of *The Southern Flag Song Book*, produced by 'bookseller and publisher' H.C. Clarke at his printing houses in Vicksburg, Mississippi and Augusta, Georgia, included *Erin's Dixie* (1863) amongst its many pro-Confederate songs. The lyrics, set to the prolific and Southern-associated melody of *Dixie*, were dedicated to Louisiana's Madison Light Artillery.<sup>69</sup> The unit was nicknamed the 'Madison Tipperary's' or 'Tips' in honour of approximately one hundred and sixty former 'Irish labourers working on the canals and ditches of the Mississippi River' originally from County Tipperary. They had joined the war as a group.<sup>70</sup> Here was a song about a specific Irish-related Confederate Army group of soldiers local to Louisiana appearing in a collection of forty-six ballads focusing on Confederate nationalism, Southern wartime experiences and fighting service, in a general songster printed and disseminated across the seceded states. *Erin's Dixie* thus spread beyond its narrow diasporic confines and became a Confederate American song through its songster reproduction. The fact that it was set to the main unofficial anthem of the Confederacy only aided this Irish version's impact more.

Union songsters that contained more general wartime sentiments for soldiers and civilians to sing placed songs by and about the Irish in the conflict amongst more American-focused ballads. One of many Union Army Irish Brigade songs entitled *The Irish Brigade* appeared in *The Continental Songster* in 1863. The songster also contained the ballad *Paddy the Loyal*. Both songs expressed Irish views of the conflict from the diaspora's home-front perspective. They were placed amongst traditional

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<sup>69</sup> *Erin's Dixie*, in *The Southern Flag Song Book* (Vicksburg & Augusta: H.C. Clarke, 1863), 20-21.

<sup>70</sup> Gleeson, *Green and the Gray*, 47; 52.

folk songs and other war-related lyrics on a varying number of pertinent themes, such as *How Are You Jeffy Davis* and *A National Melody* about anti-Confederate sentiments and pro-Union chants respectively.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, these two Irish-related songs were placed in an American collection where American audiences read, heard and performed lyrics of Irish loyalty and devotion to the American Union cause. Other songsters also gave Irish wartime sentiments an airing through their publication, as demonstrated by *Pat's Opinion of the Stars and Stripes*. This musical hall ballad, 'sung, with great applause, by Fred May', was re-published in *The Camp-Fire Songster* in 1862.<sup>72</sup> This collection contained other songs that had lyrics about the Irish fighting in the war.

Printing Irish-related songs into general American song books gave them an identity and influence beyond one that sang solely to the diaspora. They articulated to Americans that the Irish shared national loyalty and devotion either to the Union or to the Confederacy depending on the songster's focus. Placed among other ballads that spoke to a myriad of audiences across the country, the inclusion of Irish-related wartime songs about fighting service, general home-front experiences and political views provided a platform onto which Irish opinions about the conflict's issues could spread into the general populace. Their lyrical messages were shared mutually between the home-front, which produced the songsters, and the front-line, where much of their content came from, and circulated back-and-forth between the two. Printing and placement in such songster collections therefore strengthened the

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<sup>71</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M., 58-59; *Paddy the Loyal*, 'by Himself', 36-37; *How Are You Jeffy Davis*, H. Angelo, 9-11; *A National Melody*, H. Angelo, 34-36, in *The Continental Songster: A Collection of New, Spirited, Patriotic Songs, For the Times* (Philadelphia: A. Winch, 1863).

<sup>72</sup> *Pat's Opinion of the Stars and Stripes*, John F. Poole, in *The Camp-Fire Songster: A Collection of Popular, Patriotic, National, Pathetic, and Jolly Songs, Suited for the Camp or March, Containing a Number of Songs Never Before Printed* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 67-68.

American sentiments and identities of these Irish songs on both sides of the sectional divide. It also connected to the established tradition of Irish folk music and ballads becoming American cultural products.

Irish wartime songs' presence in American songster collections also reinforces an argument made by Davis that music, as well as songs, 'tended to diminish, not amplify, any cultural gaps'. He states that because tunes and lyrics had 'the ability to bring together disparate individuals into communal groups centred on specific repertoires', what can thus be classed as 'Irish' must simultaneously be seen as American because they did not belong to one ethnic community or heritage.<sup>73</sup> This argument is enhanced by the fact that the cultural blending of Irish music and song traditions began decades before the war. Even when music was reclaimed by the diaspora, such as in the case of Irish-related songs using *The Irish Jaunting Car* tune after it had become synonymous with *The Bonnie Blue Flag*, the tune's Irish identity was diminished through its diffusion into American culture. All subsequent versions served to reinforce this Irish cultural heritage American identity transformation in the Civil War era.

Dilution actually brought great cultural impact as Irish wartime songs came to shape the musical and lyrical outputs of the conflict. This was not just observable in songster contents that included both traditional and contemporary Irish-related song titles. It was also present in what *Dwight's* called 'combination' songs, a distinct form of ballad where the lyrics were all comprised of other song titles and paraphrased lines from other song sources. According to one advertisement, they were 'curious medley songs for which many people, just now, are so pleased'.<sup>74</sup> One example was *The Father of All Songs*, set in 1864 to the air of the early war ballad *The Glorious*

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<sup>73</sup> Davis, *Music Along the Rapidan*, 52.

<sup>74</sup> *Combination Song Advert*, *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 1 May 1864.

69<sup>th</sup>. The latter was about the Irish-born and descended soldiers of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York. The fact *The Father of All Songs* was set to a melody created for a song about a specific Union Army Irish regiment was itself a form of dissemination, as its tune and sentiments were transposed onto the new production. This revealed the recognisable musical impact *The Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* had made on a society.

Yet, there was more to *The Father of All Songs* than just the fact it shared its musical melody with an Irish regiment ballad. Its lyrics were comprised of song titles that revealed the cultural legacy of Irish-related traditional and wartime productions. *Corcoran's Irish Legion* was mentioned, alongside *The Irishman's Shanty*, many of Moore's ballads and *The Irish Jaunting Car*.<sup>75</sup> The song title lyrics of the piece reflected their assured place within the American musical climate and their reach beyond specific Irish enclaves across the country. Irish songs had become part of mainstream American culture. Their tunes had developed American identities. The question remained whether their lyrical sentiments would also reflect this cultural propagation during the American Civil War.

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<sup>75</sup> *The Father of All Songs*, William Dunn (New York: He. De Marsan, 1864).

## **Chapter 4**

### **‘With Their Bayonet Charges They Rushed On The Foe’**

#### **Irish American Battlefield Balladry**

Of subsequent incidents and events, the world, by this time, has heard enough...Columns and volumes have been filled...Three times did the 69<sup>th</sup> launch itself against [Confederate batteries]. Three times, having plunged head-foremost into its deadliest showers, was it hurdled back. We beat their men – their batteries beat us.<sup>1</sup>

When Thomas Francis Meagher ended his brief wartime account of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia’s journey to Bull Run in July 1861, he skimmed over the battle’s details. In his view, there was no point reiterating a by-then familiar story; ‘the world...[had] heard enough’. Published several weeks after the first major engagement of the American Civil War, Meagher made a salient point. Newspaper stories and first-hand testimonies filled ‘columns and volumes’. Instead, he chose to recount the ten days leading up the battle, and the skirmishes and marching incidents of the Irish-born and descended 69<sup>th</sup> New York soldiers and his attached band of New York Zouaves, which he was a captain of at this point in war’s early days. In so doing, Meagher helped establish a narrative of overall Irish commitment to the American Union war effort from the very start.

Yet, ‘the story of the day’ Meagher never explored, and the Irish involvement in it, was also known via another form of battlefield reporting dissemination: ballad songs about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and the First Battle of Bull Run. Irish wartime songs that focused on military experience and war service sentiments sang about two predominant themes. The first centred on the gallant bravery of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York as the foundation of all subsequent Irish military engagement in the conflict. The second

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, *The Last Days of the 69<sup>th</sup> in Virginia, A Narrative in Three Parts* (New York: Lynch & Cole, 1861), 12-13.



eulogised their fighting example at Bull Run as an indicator of their American Union loyalty and commitment. Throughout the war, songs by and about the Irish recounted events of the battles themselves, often in vivid detail, and described fighting sacrifices, military engagements, regimental actions and leadership. Irish-born and descended soldiers and the wider Irish diaspora sang of their own American Civil War experiences through such songs. They created this lyrical history from the outset.

This chapter will explore the way the Irish in the Union, and on occasion in the Confederacy, sang about their military service and battlefield experience, establishing their own memory and remembrance of their actions. It will detail how ballads reported Irish regiments' encounters to the home-front and to families in Ireland. Songs and lyrics that focused on military and fighting aspects followed extremely old patterns of war service and news dissemination first seen in oral tradition. Irish American Civil War songs followed established bardic and Celtic practices of singing about battles. They also mirrored subsequent traditions of distributing news through broadside balladry, a commonplace custom in the British Isles and Ireland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Despite some lyrics taking sweeping liberties and instances of lyrical false reporting, this chapter will demonstrate how battlefield songs about wartime service described Irish fighting contribution and understanding of the conflict.

This chapter will also analyse the way these ballads told their own regimental histories of Irish units, and how the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and the Irish Brigade became the lyrical focal point for wartime songs. This concentration on their experience has had lasting impact on historiographical focus. Nevertheless, songs question whether the regimental imbalance that results by focusing on them is in fact detrimental to Irish American Civil War studies. Moreover, Irish-born and descended soldiers frequently

aimed lyrics and song dedications towards two particular Irish-born leaders in the Union Army – Meagher himself and Michael Corcoran. Meagher, and to an even greater extent Corcoran, embodied the Irish American Civil War experience. They represented soldiering figures that those of Irish-birth and descent could and, in lyrical insistence should, emulate on the battlefield and in society. This chapter will thus highlight how the 69<sup>th</sup> New York, Irish Brigade, Meagher and Corcoran were extolled in verse and cultural productions during the war, adding new passages to the long history of Irish foreign military service history. As Meagher described the 69<sup>th</sup> New York at the First Battle of Bull Run, ‘every effort and determination’ was made by Irish-born and descended soldiers on the battlefields of the conflict on both Union and Confederate sides.<sup>2</sup> Every effort was also made to sing of a determined and loyal military history that resounded throughout America.

#### 4.1 Battle of Bull Run and 69<sup>th</sup> New York Songs

The first songs about Irish American Civil War battlefield experience were produced within days of the First Battle of Bull Run on 21 July 1861. One of the earliest was *To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>!* It described how ‘in the battle at Bull Run’, the Irish-born and descended 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia’s ‘chivalry was seen’. Alongside ‘brave Commander’ Colonel Michael Corcoran they:

Faced rebels that were mean;  
They stood in the hot battle, where balls like hailstones flew,  
Until the rebel ambush-host with balls did pierce them through.<sup>3</sup>

*The Gallant Sons of Erin*, likewise ‘dedicated to the 69<sup>th</sup> Regt. N.Y.S.M.’, appeared in Bull Run’s aftermath. It also echoed the same lyrical sentiments about the militia’s soldiers fighting bravery on the field of battle. Their ‘behaviour do excel what pen can

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>3</sup> *To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>!* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

write or tongue can tell', the song began, before verse after verse of detailed praise for the 'gallant sons of Erin', in this case the 69<sup>th</sup> New York, and how they 'were called away, to shine in battle's grand array'. Corcoran commanded 'these sporting boys from Paddies' land' and 'with sword in hand', led the unit onto the field 'when mars the blast of war will sound'. The song then went into vivid detail about the events of the battle itself, suggesting a slightly later publication than *To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>!* by a few weeks to accommodate more information of the battle's events.

The second half of *The Gallant Sons of Erin* became a lyrical war report, singing about Bull Run as a news event. It explained how the 69<sup>th</sup> New York stayed on the field 'when other troops did quickly fly' as Confederate victory looked certain:

[They] stood and did their foes defy...

At famed Manassas and Bull-Run, where glorious laurels they had won,

Not at a man being absent from his gun.

Near the song and battle's end, one verse depicted the final heroic charge of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York against the Confederate batteries. It echoed Meagher's subsequent account:

Brave Corcoran, wounded on the plain, called to his men to charge again;

Each Captain boldly did maintain a dauntless soldier's station:

And stood the plain for many an hour, though shot and shell like rain did shower,

To prove their valor, tact and power as gallant sons of Erin.<sup>4</sup>

Swift on the publication of *To The Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>!* and *Gallant Sons of Erin* were wartime ballads specifically about the events around Manassas on 21 July 1861. The similarly titled *Battle of Bull's Run* and *Battle of Bull Run* appeared in the immediate weeks following the encounter and again sang of Irish regimental involvement in events. The latter, *Battle of Bull Run*, was 'dedicated to the 69<sup>th</sup> Regt. N.Y.S.M.' by F. Collins. Its lyrics extolled:

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<sup>4</sup> *The Gallant Sons of Erin* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

Our gallant soldiers they are gone to the battle field of fame  
 To defend the glorious Stars and Stripes and put to flight with shame  
 Each proud secession leader with bayonet sword and gun.

The 69<sup>th</sup> New York stood above all as ‘the terror of Bull Run’ against Confederates.

The song described how on this:

Field of fame we did maintain against an enemy,  
 Conceal’d in woods and ambuscades and their masked batteries  
 Till Johnson with his forces and the black Cavalry  
 Turned our scale of battle or we’d gain the victory.

Collins adopted a traditional broadside balladry style, using song to report events and disseminate news. He informed listeners about what had happened during the fighting, providing information that could be spread widely. Collins described the layout of Union and Confederate positions. In a similar way to Meagher’s personal recollections, Collins presented a lyrical assessment of why the Union lost – no matter the brave fighting commitment of Irish-born and descended soldiers, eventually the numerical balance shifted towards Confederate troops. This turned the ‘scale of battle’. *Battle of Bull Run*’s final four lines stressed that as Irish-born and descended soldiers performed so gallantly, their retreat was not a loss. It was a noble surrender justified by Confederate circumstance:

Over ten long hours we fought most manfully,  
 Against four to one a fearful odds of men we could not see,  
 Until amongst our teamsters a panic had begun,  
 Then we did retreat but were not beat at the battle of Bull Run.

In addition to this sense of Irish victory in defeat, Collins emphasised it was a temporary setback for the 69<sup>th</sup> New York. Future Irish-born and descended army recruits would ‘make [Confederates] pay severely for the battle at Bull Run’. The idea

was repeated at the song's conclusion, with the lyrical voice of Colonel Corcoran telling his men 'we'll make them pay some other day for the battle of Bull Run'.<sup>5</sup>

By comparison, Arthur McCann's ballad *Battle of Bull's Run* included descriptions of battle fighting and incidences in its final two verses. The tone, however, was less enthusiastic about defeat. Lyrics noted that despite 'the heroes of Erin' having 'strong hearts', the toll of unprecedented fighting had a cost. 'Haggerty bled on the field of the brave', the song sang, referring to Captain James Haggerty. Born in County Donegal, Haggerty was a long-standing member of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia. He became the first Union Army Irish officer casualty of the war. His death and memory would be lamented in subsequent accounts and occasional lyrics throughout the war. Haggerty and the other Irish-born and descended soldiers who fell at Bull Run would be remembered, McCann's lyrics promised:

Long may their names sound in history pages,  
That fell in the contest, that day at Bull's Run.<sup>6</sup>

Haggerty's death also made a lyrical appearance on a broadside published in Ireland reporting the events of the First Battle of Bull Run. *Our Brave Irish Champions*, printed in Cork in 1861, began:

You feeling-hearted Christians of high & low degree  
I hope you'll pay attention and listen unto me,  
The great battle in America to you I will explain,  
On the 21<sup>st</sup> day of July, there was 20,000 slain.

Written by Thomas Walsh, this particular Bull Run ballad mirrored eighteenth century broadside practices of recounting events like news reports, informing the Irish in Ireland about the heroic fighting experience of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and singing

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<sup>5</sup> *Battle of Bull Run*, F. Collins (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

<sup>6</sup> *Battle of Bull's Run*, Arthur McCann, in Robert L. Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1975), 457-458.

about the battle and events in America more broadly. It also related to wider articulations of Irish martial history through ballad references about the battles of Fontenoy, Waterloo and the Crimean War to name but a few, as well as older traditions of naming particular martial figures for soldiers to emulate as heroes. This aspect of Irish ballad culture will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5, but what is clear is that from the earliest songs about the Irish American Civil War experience, expressions of Irish heroic martial identity were extolled. Figurative discussions about battlefield bravery exhibited by tough fighting men run throughout Irish culture and contemporary songs. James Haggerty's example, along with that of his fellow fighting Irish brethren in the Civil War, followed this tradition.<sup>7</sup> In the case of *Our Brave Irish Champions*, this martial identity praise was combined with the adoption of a more factual tone, as the song reported:

By the dawn on Sunday morning, that battle did take place,  
 'Till Six o'Clock that Evening, the firing did not cease...  
 And many a valiant Irishman lay bleeding on the plain....  
 A scene of horrid slaughter was the battle field that day,  
 The 69<sup>th</sup> brave Irishmen were all near cut away.

On the other hand, Walsh's lyrical reporting was not always accurate. *Our Brave Irish Champions* serves as a good example of the pitfalls of broadside balladry recounting events as a form of news dissemination. Whilst it was correct to sing of how 'we need expect no more' from the fallen 'gallant Captain Haggerty', other 69<sup>th</sup> New York officers, such as County Down native Robert Nugent, were described falsely as having died 'all bleeding in...gore'. It is possible that the lyric prior to this, noting how 'Nugent fell dead of his horse', was a mistaken account relating to Thomas Francis Meagher who *did* fall off his horse at Manassas. Interestingly,

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<sup>7</sup> For exploration on wider understandings and cultural expressions of martial identity in Irish history, see Daithí O'Hogain, *The Hero in Irish Folklore* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985).

Walsh's ballad corrects itself in relation to Meagher, singing how the Young Irelander 'who was exiled in '48, far from his native land' had not in fact fallen on a Virginia battlefield in 1861: 'the great report of Meagher's death is false we understand'.<sup>8</sup> This conflation of actual casualties, rumours and confused identities, and false lyrical reporting of actual events, demonstrates how fluid and changeable the dissemination of war news was back to the home-front and, in this case, across to Ireland, at a time when there was little process for ensuring accuracy in contemporary wartime cultural accounts.

Walsh's Bull Run ballad also followed a traditional pattern common in British and Irish broadside print culture. Songs could be used to sing shorter, more embellished versions of real-life accounts. Subsequent wartime ballads likewise used headline-like titles to emphasise balladry's role as printed culture news publications. The full title of Walsh's song made the new reporting nature of the ballad explicitly clear: *Our Brave Irish Champions – A New Song on the GREAT BATTLE FOUGHT IN AMERICA! On Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 1861*. In this way, it conformed to practices of broadside print culture sharing similar qualities as newspapers. In 1862, the *New Song on the Dreadful Engagement, and Tremendous Loss of the Irish in America* detailed the Union occupation of New Orleans from a Confederate point of view. It noted how Louisiana's Irish-born and descended soldiers attempted to resist opposing forces: 'Erin's sons did loudly cry – We'll die before we'll yield'.<sup>9</sup>

Around the same time in 1862, *A New Song on the Last Battle Fought in America* appeared that detailed the fighting around Croom's Landing in Pittsburgh, Tennessee, as part of the Battle of Shiloh. It noted how 'thousands fought and bleed',

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<sup>8</sup> *Our Brave Irish Champions – A New Song on the GREAT BATTLE FOUGHT IN AMERICA! On Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 1861*, Thomas Walsh (Cork: Haly, 1861).

<sup>9</sup> *New Song on the Dreadful Engagement, and Tremendous Loss of the Irish in America* (1861), in Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 461.

including ‘Irishmen though far from home’. The chorus called for cheers ‘to toast to those across the weaves [waves] each Irishman and Yankie brave’.<sup>10</sup> These songs were published in Ireland. So too was *A Lamentation on the American War – Awful Battle at Vicksburg* by P.J. Fitzpatrick, printed in the late summer of 1863 after the Union victory at Vicksburg, Mississippi. Similar to *Our Brave Irish Champions*, its lyrics informed those in Ireland about the fighting and loss of Irish-born and descended soldiers, this time focusing on those serving in the Confederate Army as well as the Union. It sang of how ‘Old Erin’s flag on both sides hoisted [hoisted] by Irish hearts’.<sup>11</sup>

Irish American Civil War ballads continued to refer to Bull Run in the aftermath of July 1861. The battle, along with the 69<sup>th</sup> New York’s involvement in it, served as the foundation for subsequent productions. Bull Run and the 69<sup>th</sup> New York therefore created the cultural beginning for future Irish wartime history told through song. Lyrical reports about battlefield actions also matched the praise Irish-born and descended soldiers received from their commanding officers. In the first part of his wartime account, Michael Corcoran recalled the ‘thrill of joyful pride’ that ran through him ‘when I beheld the alacrity and cheerfulness with which the men set themselves about the task’. He detailed the 69<sup>th</sup> New York’s charges:

When my brave boys threw themselves fiercely against the rebel ranks...To a single man, they dashed, with terrific shouts and yells, straight onto the battery.

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<sup>10</sup> *A New Song on the Last Battle Fought in America* (Ireland, 1862), Ibid., 463.

<sup>11</sup> *A Lamentation on the American War – Awful Battle at Vicksburg*, P.J. Fitzpatrick (Ireland, 1863), Ibid., 459-460.



As the battle turned, ‘no man wavered. All behaved with veteran coolness...Right gallantly did the men of the Sixty Ninth maintain their proud distinction’.<sup>12</sup> Meagher’s own brief Bull Run account recalled a similar sentiment. For the Irish-born officer ‘no soldiers could have rushed to battle with healthier elasticity and daring than did the soldiers of the 69<sup>th</sup>’.<sup>13</sup>

Meagher and Corcoran’s accounts, as well as subsequent recollections by officer-historians of the Irish American Civil War experience such as David Power Conyngham and St. Clair Augustine Mulholland, reinforced the mutual connection between the stories recounted in wartime ballads and battlefield accounts. Indeed, when Corcoran’s memoir began to circulate in 1863 and gained wider publication in 1864, his description of the battle at the start kept memory of Irish service on the battlefield in Bull Run in 1861 alive. It engrained the fighting commitment the songs highlighted. From *Long Live the Sixty-Ninth* (1861) hailing ‘the men now in triumph returning’ as the unit came home to New York ‘black with battle-smoke, radiant with fame’, to *We Will Have the Union Still* (1861), which reinforced the message that ‘though from Bull Run we retreated’ the 69<sup>th</sup> New York’s Irish soldiers fought ‘ten to one’ victoriously, wartime lyricists ensured the whole Union knew about this military commitment.<sup>14</sup>

They also ensured wider society knew these soldiers were ready to make this commitment again. *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (1862) even argued in one lyric that the 69<sup>th</sup> New York, regrouping as a regiment, were ‘our brave Army’s foundation’,

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Corcoran, *The Captivity of General Corcoran: The Only Authentic and Reliable Narrative of the Trials and Sufferings Endured, During his Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Richmond and Other Southern Cities, by Brigadier-General Michael Corcoran, the Hero of Bull Run* (Philadelphia: Barclay & Co, 1864), 23-24.

<sup>13</sup> Meagher, *Last Days of the 69<sup>th</sup>*, 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Long Live the Sixty-Ninth*, Mr. Mullaly (New York: James Wrigley, 1861); *We Will Have Our Union Still*, Robert Smith (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

thus placing the Irish at the Union Army's centre. They were to swear allegiance to the country and help it 'ride the foul storm' secession caused.<sup>15</sup> Over the course of late summer 1861, the 69<sup>th</sup> New York became the founding regiment of the Union Army's official Irish Brigade, commanded ultimately by Meagher himself. With the Brigade's formation, streams of song sheets were penned in its honour. Of all the dominant sentiments and subjects sung about in Irish American wartime ballads, lyrics about the Irish Brigade were the most frequent.

## 4.2 Irish Brigade Ballads

Irish Brigade ballads built upon the lyrical sentiments of 69<sup>th</sup> New York song productions, extolling fighting service, heroic leadership, sacrifice. and recounting battlefield actions even when the unit was not always present. So critical was the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's role as the foundation to the Union Army's official Irish military core that *The Irish Brigade* (1862) – the first of numerous ballads of the same name – recalled how when Irish-born and descended soldiers were:

Surrounded by carnage and slaughter,  
At Bull Run, and Lexington too...  
Although by large forces o'erpowered,  
No soldier or chief was afraid:  
There ne'er was traitor or coward,  
In the ranks of the Irish Brigade.<sup>16</sup>

Written in Woburn, Massachusetts, in January 1862, this local state lyrical devotion to the Irish Brigade implied the unit fought at the First Battle of Bull Run *before* it had been officially formed, laying the ground for subsequent lyrical conflation between the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and the Irish Brigade. Combination of the two appeared in

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<sup>15</sup> *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862).

<sup>16</sup> *The Irish Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, January 1862).

subsequent wartime lyrics. This particular Irish Brigade ballad was also produced before the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts had even joined the unit's ultimate five-regiment complement. Thus six months after the start of the war, Irish-born and descended soldiers mustering for the American Union cause had already gained a praiseworthy reputation across the country, aided by early war lyrical productions.

*The Irish Brigade's* lyrical sentiment of Irish-born and descended soldiers being unafraid against opposing Confederate forces shaped the way members of the diaspora learnt about Irish Brigade stories during the conflict. Later in the war, when Daniel Crowley wrote to his friend Cornelius Flynn to inform him that he had joined the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, he explained:

I need not tell you that this Regt is one of Gen Meagher's old Brigade.  
The old fellows here spin some good ones about their escape from death.<sup>17</sup>

Crowley's brief comment reveals much about mutual knowledge of the Irish Brigade's wartime encounters. His phrase 'I need not tell you' is key here. Crowley did not need to explain; Flynn would understand with whom the former was fighting and what that meant in the context of Irish service in the Union Army. Tales circulated the home-front, similar to those heard in songs and disseminated stories by Brigade 'old fellows'. Moreover, if Crowley sounded a tad disbelieving of Irish Brigade veterans spinning good yarns about their war service, he needed only to read and listen to the myriad of Irish Brigade ballads first produced around its initial inception in late summer 1861 and sang about its honourable war contributions in 1862. Following on from the Woburn-written *The Irish Brigade*, many similar-titled ballads appeared, such as *The Irish Brigade in America*, *The Irish Brigade* by Hugh F.

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<sup>17</sup> Daniel Crowley to Cornelius Flynn, 2 April 1864, Daniel Crowley Letters to Cornelius Flynn, BA.

McDermott and *The Irish Brigade*, written by a Kate C.M. and published in *The Continental Songster*.

Such was the prevalence of Irish Brigade ballad titles and songs about and dedicated to the unit that P.T. Hade's 1861 *Camp Song of the Irish Chicago Brigade* appears to have altered its specific association during the war. First written and 'respectfully dedicated to the Brigade' established by second-generation New York-born Irish American Colonel James A. Mulligan, the ballad was produced for his 23<sup>rd</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Affectionately known as 'the Irish Brigade' in Chicago and Illinois, the unit was never an official Union Army brigade; the name was in honour of its eastern state counterparts. Early music score books of Hade's ballad produced by the famous music publishers Root and Cady contained lyrics, pianoforte and voice music printed under the full title referring to Mulligan's unit.<sup>18</sup> Later in the war, when the song was reproduced elsewhere in the Union, including by the Philadelphian printer A.W. Auner, *Chicago* disappeared from the title.<sup>19</sup> Hade's lyrics were not overtly specific to Mulligan's men, thus the song was regularly adapted and used to extol the fighting service of the official Irish Brigade. This subtle change indicates the dominance of the official unit and its regiments over wartime song culture outputs.

Local and specific ballads that drew on Union Army Irish Brigade references could also be found in the Confederacy. In one edition of his *New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* songsters, publisher John Hopkins printed *Song for the Irish Brigade* (1861). The ballad sang about the Irish-born and descended soldiers serving in

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<sup>18</sup> *Camp Song of the Chicago Irish Brigade*, P.T. Hade (Chicago: Root & Cady, 1861). Archive catalogues confuse/acknowledge the local and national fluidity of Hade's song title. Root & Cady's music scorebook appears as both *Camp Song of the Chicago Irish Brigade* and *Camp Song of the Irish Brigade*, see LOC, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihms.200001440/>.

<sup>19</sup> *Camp Song of the Irish Brigade*, P.T. Hade (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, c.1862).

Louisianan regiments. As with Mulligan's Illinois example, the Confederacy did not have a comparative official Irish Brigade. Nonetheless, this Confederate 'Irish Brigade' song contained the same lyrical rhetoric about Irish loyalty and fighting service, rousing the Irishmen of Louisiana to fight for their state and secession. They would go to the war's battlefields and:

Let the rifle ring, and the bullet sing  
To the clash of the flashing sabre!<sup>20</sup>

Yet, for all the local variations of Irish Brigade-inspired and response ballads, the vast majority focused on the Union Army's Irish 63<sup>rd</sup>, 69<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> New York, the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts and the 116<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiments – the official Irish Brigade organised in the months following the First Battle of Bull Run and led, in the early years of the war, by Thomas Francis Meagher. After their mobilisation, Irish Brigade songs sang of the seven days of fighting around Richmond and the Battle of Fair Oaks/Seven Pines at the end of May 1862 where Meagher roused his units to charge Confederate lines. *Young Ireland and Ould America* reported these events when it was 'sung by Tony Pastor' at his New York music hall in July and August 1862. The song praised 'America's Irish Brigade!' repeatedly in its chorus refrain. Sung from the point of view of one Irish soldier in the Brigade, its lyrics explained:

In the seven days' fight, sure I stood at my post,  
And each pop of my gun made some Rebel a ghost;  
And whenever the word came to charge, by me sowl [soul]!  
I made in some blackguard a bayonet-hole!<sup>21</sup>

The song's lyrical report removed some of battle's realism from its recollections. Its verses differ greatly in tone from an account given after the war by Irish Brigade

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<sup>20</sup> *Song for the Irish Brigade*, in Hopkins' *New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* (New Orleans: John Hopkins, 1861), 14-15.

<sup>21</sup> *Young Ireland and Ould America* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862).

chaplain Father William Corby who recalled how when he took ‘a hasty look over the locality’ after the fighting at Fair Oaks ceased: ‘dead horses, broken muskets...and general destruction of life and property’.<sup>22</sup> None of this detail made it into song. Instead, the fictional singing soldier gave more specific detail about charging against Confederate General Stonewall Jackson’s troops and how the Fair Oaks encounter was similar to that of Bull Run ten months before. The song drew on this former engagement for fighting inspiration. It also used the battle as part of a lyrical pun referring to Irish nationalist independence ideas that appeared from time to time in wartime songs, as will be discussed later in this study:

When ould Stone-wall came down like a thousand of brick,  
It’s meself and the boys drove him back double quick:  
For, we thought of Bull-Run, and our bosoms were full,  
And we wished we were RUN-ning on ould Johnny Bull.<sup>23</sup>

References to Irish Brigade battles in 1862 appeared in ballads the following year.<sup>24</sup> One example was *The Irish Brigade in America*, also printed as *The Soldier’s Letter from America* across the Atlantic in Ireland and the British Isles in 1863. The

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<sup>22</sup> William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years Chaplain in the Famous Irish Brigade* (Chicago: La Monte, 1893), 63.

<sup>23</sup> *Young Ireland and Ould America*.

<sup>24</sup> One 1862 battle that did not make significant song appearance was the Battle of Antietam. Why this infamous engagement was omitted from the lyrical lexicon is unclear. Ural notes the Irish Brigade’s ‘extremely high casualty rates’ at Antietam spoke to their ‘courage and steadiness under fire’ and they were ‘a credit to the valor and ability of Irish American soldiers’, Susannah J. Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 101; 120. A suggestion for Antietam’s lyrical absence may be that the reality of American history’s bloodiest single day of combat could not be expressed in song verse. However, sixteen months after the battle, Patrick Collins, an Irish descended 6<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry soldier, wrote to his sister on the reverse of song-sheet stationery published by New York’s Charles Magnus (similar to the style Daniel Crowley used and mentioned previously). The song on this writing paper was *The Drummer of Antietam*, written by Eugene T. Johnston in 1862 and set to Thomas Moore’s air *Last Rose of Summer*. Despite the Irish connections to this example, the lyrics were about the general post-battle mournful atmosphere as ‘the drummer of Antietam lays dead and alone’, Patrick Collins to his sister, 24 January 1864, Application WC94716 in the Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Civil War Veterans, F3.

song began by suggesting ‘it is vain for to describe the undaunted bravery of the Irish brigade...in North America’, before singing about much ‘undaunted bravery’ over several verses. Its lyrics reinforced the idea that the Irish Brigade ‘fought right manfully’ at the Bull Run (while actually meaning the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia), before describing engagements:

At Port Royal they faced the enemy;  
At Fair Oaks, through fire and smoke, they made them for to yield;  
And twelve hours’ engagement we were masters of the field.  
The fearful scene at Richmond was dreadful to behold,  
By shot and shell some thousands fell, and spread dismay around.

The rest of the ballad fixed on one particularly infamous moment in Irish American Civil War history. In December 1862, the Battle of Fredericksburg would cement the Irish Brigade’s lasting Union Army fame. The final verses of *The Irish Brigade in America* focused lyrical attention on the unit’s charge on the field at Marye’s Heights by the edge of the Virginian town of Fredericksburg on 13 December. For the only time in the war, the full five regimental compliment of the Brigade would serve alongside each other. The ballad detailed events in traditional lyrical reporting style:

At Mary’s Heights near Fredericksburg recorded it shall be,  
After three days’ battle we gained the victory.  
The thirteenth of December began this bloody fray,  
The Irish brigade six charges made to die or win the day,  
With bayonets fixed they charged the heights, and death soon scattered round,  
And thousands of the Southerners lay dead upon the ground.  
The 69<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> were first upon the field,  
Led on by Col. Nugent, determined not to yield:  
Their band played sweet Garry Owen likewise St. Patrick’s day,  
And in six decisive charges they nobly cleared the way.

As with similar song-verse news reports, *The Irish Brigade in America* mixed fact and embellishment to enhance the Irish Brigade's service on the field. It created a noble image of Irish military service spurred on by regimental bands playing the Irish airs of *Garryowen* and *St. Patrick's Day*. It made reference to the Irish-born and descended soldiers of the 69<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> New York commanded by Colonel Robert Nugent, who was ultimately wounded during the battle. As with ballads that appeared across the Atlantic in the immediate aftermath of Civil War engagements, this example also exaggerated the Irish Brigade's role in the fight. 'After three days' battle' the unit, and the whole Union Army did not gain the victory as the lyrics implied.<sup>25</sup>

Instead, the Irish Brigade's involvement in the Union Army's charges up Marye's Heights had a catastrophic impact on its regiments. The Battle of Fredericksburg resulted in an estimated 45% percent loss for the whole Brigade, reducing regimental numbers significantly.<sup>26</sup> Corby stated the 'brigade was cut to pieces'. In the days following 'we had only the remnant of a brigade left' and Corby 'had a very small congregation compared with former ones' when he held Mass.<sup>27</sup> Other Union Army regiments suffered a similar fate. Despite suggesting the Irish Brigade were victorious, *The Irish Brigade in America* was more subdued in its closing lines. It acknowledged that the unit's praiseworthy service came at a high cost:

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<sup>25</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America/The Soldier's Letter from America* (Glasgow: James Lindsay, 1863).

<sup>26</sup> The estimated 45% Irish Brigade Fredericksburg loss through death, injury and missing soldiers was spread across its five regiments, see Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 132-133.

<sup>27</sup> Corby described the Irish Brigade's post-Fredericksburg mood as 'sad, very sad', calling Marye's Heights a slaughter, Corby, *Memoirs of a Chaplain Life*, 133-134.



To see the dead and wounded it would grieve the heart full sore,  
 And the moans of dying soldiers all bleeding in their gore.  
 Oh, many a sweetheart may lament, and mother for her son,  
 That fell that day at Mary's Heights, Port Royal, and Bull Run.<sup>28</sup>

The high toll on Irish Brigade numbers and leadership – which the unit never fully managed to recover from for the remainder of the war – has framed Susannah Ural's argument that over the course of the second half of the conflict diaspora support declined rapidly. She suggests the decrease in war eagerness in 1863 onwards was a result of heavy losses at Antietam and Fredericksburg. This meant that 1862 'ended in a dark mood for many northern Irish Americans'. Using criticism voiced in newspaper editorials of Meagher's Irish Brigade leadership and Union Army policies aimed at Irish communities in the Northern states – especially in New York's *Irish-American* and Boston's *Pilot* presses – and home-front clergy and families lamenting Irish-born and descended soldiers' deaths, Ural argues that 'what had begun so gloriously with the formation of the Irish Brigade' in late 1861 and early 1862, ended with despondency in the aftermath of Fredericksburg. News of the battle and Irish casualties lead to a 're-examining the direction of the war, and [the Irish] place in it'.<sup>29</sup>

However, close analysis of Irish American Civil War songs raised challenges and counterpoints to this assessment. Even as New York, Boston and Philadelphia's Irish communities came to terms with casualty reports, lyricists penned verses that continued to extol Irish wartime service and pride in aiding the American Union war effort. In the weeks following events at Marye's Heights, ballad poetry by *Irish-American* newspaper contributors appeared in early 1863, such as *The Irish Brigade*

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<sup>28</sup> *Irish Brigade in America*.

<sup>29</sup> Ural, *Harp and Eagle*, 134.

at *Fredericksburg*.<sup>30</sup> These writings did not express a despondent attitude. Three months after the battle, on St. Patrick's Day 1863, one home-front poet wrote and sent *The Irish Dead at Fredericksburg Heights* to *The Irish-American*. It did not present a negative image of Irish war contribution; its dominant sentiments were of pride that Irish and descended soldiers earned such fame fighting for the cause of republican liberty and their American home nation. Describing the fallen and buried dead at Fredericksburg, the ballad poem's author Kate M. Boylan described:

Upon this holy ground,  
                     In reverence deep,  
                     For those who sleep,  
                     Beneath each lowly mound...  
 They came from Carlow's fertile plains,  
                     And Wexford's woody vales,  
                     From Innishowen,  
                     And green Tyrone,  
                     And Wicklow's hills and dales.  
 They came to seek amid the free,  
                     Homes to reward their toil,  
                     In which to see  
                     That Liberty  
                     Unknown on Erin's soil.<sup>31</sup>

An understandable impression of honourable sacrifice pervades all Irish wartime ballads about their involvement in American Civil War battles. Differing from Ural's argument of diaspora despondency, wartime songs praised the dead and injured. Any lamentation was couched in rhetoric about worthy sacrifice to the American Union cause. Confederate examples did not touch on the issue at all. At no

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<sup>30</sup> *The Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg*, 'Alexis', *The Irish-American* (New York), 31 January 1863.

<sup>31</sup> *The Irish Dead on Fredericksburg Heights*, Kate M. Boylan, *Irish-American*, 2 May 1863.

point do ballad lyrics ever suggest directly, or hint subtly, that the Irish would not fight. While Ural has suggested ‘the growing sense...that they were being asked to sacrifice too much’ impacted Irish American Union support in the middle of the conflict, this does not mean the whole diaspora had ‘diminishing support for the war’.<sup>32</sup> To be sure, a sense of war weariness can be observed in later war ballads. Singing about battles ceased in the final year of the conflict. Yet, this is a trend that can be observed across the broader spectrum of American Civil War songs produced throughout the Union and Confederacy.<sup>33</sup>

The Irish, certainly in song, were no more or less quiet than their fellow American compatriots when it came to singing about their war service as the conflict continued. When *Lamentation on the American War* reported the events at Vicksburg to those in Ireland where it was published in 1863, it did not present a sense of despair and rage against the war itself. Instead, P.J. Fitzpatrick’s lyrics lamented the fact that Irish-born and descended soldiers serving on the Union and Confederate sides were fighting and killing each other:

Heaps of Irish heroes brave on the plains there lay,  
That was both killed and wounded there all in America.

Fitzpatrick certainly presented a mournful scene but it was one that could be applied to any soldier in the war. The one difference in this example was that the soldiers were of Irish ethnicity. Indeed, the only ballad song to sing of Irish-born and descended soldier service for the Union and Confederacy together, most of *A*

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<sup>32</sup> Susannah J. Ural, “‘Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble’: Northern Irish American Catholics and the Union War Effort, 1861-1865’ in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America’s Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah J. Ural (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 113.

<sup>33</sup> For example, few general song lyrics exist about the Battle of Gettysburg’s three days of fighting, a marked contrast to how the engagement has dominated American Civil War studies.

*Lamentation on the American War* echoed the ballad practice of presenting a battle narrative as seen in the earlier war examples. The ballad contained a lyrical depiction of the fighting at Vicksburg and a stark image of its aftermath:

Like thunder bolts, the balls do fly from the artillery,  
The fire and smoke ascend the sky most dismal for to see,  
The brother fight the brother and the father fight the son,  
And after all no sign at all of this sad war being done.  
Thro' fields of blood we have waded, where, cannon balls do roar  
And many a brave commander lay bleeding in their gore...  
After each and every battle, see the memory of the dead,  
Some wanting legs and arms, and more without their heads,  
In pits some thousands here does lie far from their native clay,  
To take a long and silent sleep until the Judgement day.<sup>34</sup>

In a similar vein, lyricist Hugh F. McDermott used vivid imagery to paint the scenes of Fredericksburg and Marye's Heights in his Irish Brigade ballad ode *The Irish Brigade*, published within a matter of weeks of the battle in January 1863. The most true to traditional epic-style broadside form, McDermott's song stretched to thirteen stanzas, the longest complete ballad verse of this study. Its sole focus was on the Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg, the charges up Marye's Heights and Thomas Francis Meagher's inspiring leadership before the fight. In relentless iambic metre beating through the lyrics, the middle of the song drew listeners onto the field, creating aural and visual sights and sounds experienced by Irish Brigade soldiers:

With shout and yell, and stunning peal,  
Their vengeance leapt upon their steel;  
With shock and dash, and plunge and stroke,  
'Mid roaring seas of fire and smoke,  
Their desperate valor shook the earth,

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<sup>34</sup> *Lamentation on the American War*.

When the foes cried out, 'Who gave them birth?'

Each heart was steel, each eye was fire,

With reeling gash from son and sire,

The pulse so held the breath with might,

Each vein was soldier in the fight.

With rage and wrath, and rushing tread,

Again they charge the rain of lead,

And vie with those who went before

To deck their brows with ribbon-gore;

When soul to soul they pressed attack,

The thundering cannon swept them back.

As more they saw red currents flow;

More fiercely on they charged the foe;

And as the dying gasped for life

Their spirit still impelled the strife –

Like wounded pinions posing high,

The first to soar – the last to die.<sup>35</sup>

More than any other ballad focusing on war service and battle events, McDermott's *Irish Brigade* ballad created inspiring lyrical rhetoric that elevated the Irish Brigade in the eyes of the diaspora and wider Union society when the song circulated New York and Boston in January 1863. Its tone, although also drawing on images of war horror and death, emphasised the repeated refrain of sacrifice with honour and noble battlefield endeavours that should be remembered with commemoration.

With all these ballad examples circulating within and beyond the diaspora from Bull Run in 1861 to Vicksburg in 1863, these sources raise alternative articulations and counter much of Ural's argument presentation of one umbrella Irish American diaspora wartime viewpoint that grew critical of the Civil War. The exploits of the Irish Brigade and their conduct on the battlefields of the war were

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<sup>35</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Hugh F. McDermott (New York: Frank McElroy, 1863).

written into song and sung with pride, inspiring serving soldiers across the Union Army and demonstrating how loyal the Irish in America were to the conflict. As Daniel Crowley knew and revealed in his correspondence, he was in a regiment that had witnessed some of the toughest engagements of the war by 1864. Many of these, such as Fredericksburg, were already commemorated in circulating song lyrics. Indeed, in Crowley's final letter to Flynn at the end of the conflict, the now battle-hardened young Irish-born soldier noted how the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts returned to Alexandria, Virginia, via Fredericksburg. He explained to his friend how he had 'passed through where this [Irish] Brigade charged under Meagher on the 13 Dec 1862'.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, Irish Brigade stories, and those about other Irish regiments in the Union and Confederate armies, were found in diasporic and national newspapers. These provided evidential support to broadside ballad lyrics. They also gave inspiration to Irish soldiers who followed wartime accounts through the presses. This certainly was the case in the spring of 1862 when Michael Corcoran recorded in his memoir how he followed the actions of his former 69<sup>th</sup> New York soldiers. They were now part of the Irish Brigade. Corcoran noted with delight:

In one or two of the New York papers that fortune put in my possession, I got scraps of information respecting the doings and movements of the GALLANT SIXTY NINTH...Nothing gave me more pleasure than the promotion of the various officers and members of which the regiment was composed.

He recorded how his 'heart leaped as I read the words: *THE SIXTY NINTH RALLYING AGAIN!*' His:

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<sup>36</sup> Crowley to Flynn, 17 May 1865.

Eager eyes devoured each word and each letter of the paragraph which told me that the brave Irish lads were once more baring their manly breasts to the battle storm, and that they were once more nerving their brawny arms to strike.

In his own particular style of lyrical language that also recalled tropes about Irish martial identity bravery and heroism, Corcoran painted his own imaginings about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's war service. Such thoughts would not be out of place in song. He even drew on ballad rhetoric to enhance his own personal depictions of his what former command was doing:

In fancy I saw them...marshalled to the bugle note...In fancy I saw them making ready for the onset; saw them moving forward steadily, quicker and quicker, until, with wild shouts of victory, they burst upon and scattered the foe...My eager soul chafed its dwelling like a caged eagle who wishes to spread his pinions to the tempest's blast.<sup>37</sup>

This fighting fantasy came from an imprisoned Corcoran who had only ever seen one battle engagement. Yet, as already argued, he certainly drew from accounts and songs he read and heard while in Confederate captivity. He was also likely aware that as he read about the exploits of his 69<sup>th</sup> New York, he too was making a lyrical impression in the verses of Irish American Civil War balladry. Indeed, Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher's personal military careers added another layer to war service song rhetoric that, arguably, served as inspiration to the diaspora and to wider American society during the conflict.

#### **4.3 Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher**

Of all the Irish-born and descended officers, soldiers and sailors whose war service was written into American Civil War songs, arguably Michael Corcoran stands above

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<sup>37</sup> Corcoran, *Captivity of General Corcoran*, 94-95.

all others. The most frequent figure in Irish wartime ballads, Corcoran became a familiar person in wider American song culture from the ballads about this command of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia through to his death during the conflict in late 1863. His own military service predated the Civil War itself – he had served with the militia from his earliest migrant days, joining the unit in 1849 not long after settling in the United States, and steadily rose through its ranks before becoming its colonel before Southern secession and the conflict began.

Indeed, ballads about Corcoran's early military service in America were first printed in the aftermath of one of the most infamous moments in mid-nineteenth century Irish American history: Corcoran's refusal to participate in a parade held in honour of Prince Edward of Wales when the future British king visited North America in October 1860.<sup>38</sup> For his assumed insubordination, Corcoran was awaiting for a court martial trial when the southern states started seceding from the Union. Immediately, Corcoran pledged loyalty to the American Union and offered up his militia to defend the nation's capital. The Irish 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia thus became one of the very first units mustered into Union Army service in May 1861.

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<sup>38</sup> Corcoran also declined to go to the 'ball in honor of the Prince of Wales...given by the citizens of New York' after the parade, M.B. Fields to Charles P. Daly, Invitation to 'The Ball in Honor of the Prince of Wales', 3 October 1860, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

<sup>38</sup> Debate surrounds the exact reason why Corcoran refused to march his men: claims that rules about how many parades militias could march during the year and personal illness provide two suggestions. The other reason related to the diaspora's view of British rule over Ireland and nationalist tensions in the mid-nineteenth century, and publically both Corcoran and his close acquaintance Thomas Francis Meagher suggested this was the underlying cause. Song lyrics about the Prince of Wales story, however, were not explicit about this reason, focusing on the fact that Corcoran would march under the Star Spangled Banner at the start of the conflict. Charles Graham Halpine, one of Corcoran's acquaintances, later wrote that the event 'was an Irish demonstration for an Irish object to illustrate an Irish sentiment'. Yet the reason Corcoran was not punished, according to Halpine, was that there was 'a token of sympathy that exists between the American and Irish people' when it came to Irish nationalism, Charles Graham Halpine, *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly [Pseud.], 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New York Volunteers, with Comic Illustrations by Mullen, from the Authentic Records of the 'New York Herald'* (New York: Carleton, 1864), 86.



Corcoran's refusal to parade and the 69<sup>th</sup> New York Prince of Wales story was cemented by its inclusion in ballads written in the first weeks of the war prior to fighting beginning in July 1861. If anything, the history of Irish American Civil War service, and the songs produced about this service, began with the opening lines of *Col. Corcoran and the Prince of Wales* (1861). Its initial verses reiterated the Prince of Wales affair, retelling Corcoran's version of events up to the point of Confederate state secession:

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of October eighteen hundred and sixty,  
 New York was the city for every good thing;  
 In peace and in plenty the rich ones in numbers  
 Did march to the tune of God save the King!  
 Through the street and the parks the Militia did start,  
 For to take a part in the Royal parade:  
 There was one stood alone....  
 [Corcoran] would not comply for to honor the King.  
 Court-martial was ordered the jury was panelled,  
 To try this brave Hero for no other offence;  
 His naturalization doth say that no allegiance we pay,  
 So he pleaded straightaway against the English Prince.

Then, once 'the South did combine' to secede and threaten to 'take of this once very happy land' Washington D.C., the court martial 'trial was dismiss'd' and 'brave Corcoran again did resume his command'.<sup>39</sup> The rest of the song detailed the journey of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia to the capital and their defensive establishment outside the city around Arlington Heights at the appropriately renamed Fort Corcoran.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Col. Corcoran and the Prince of Wales* (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

<sup>40</sup> Although Irish American Civil War songs stopped referring to the story to any great extent beyond 1861, Corcoran's Prince of Wales incident remained known after the war. In 1868, when Prince Edward visited Ireland, one American newspaper commented that New York's

After the conflict began in earnest, Corcoran became a notable figure present in many of the Irish-related wartime ballads produced in the aftermath of the First Battle of Bull Run. He was depicted as a brave commander rallying his Irish soldiers. Even near the engagement's end, *Battle of Bull Run* depicted 'the gallant Colonel Corcoran' who, while allegedly lying:

Prostrate on the ground,  
Weary and fatigued and exhausted from his wound...  
Cried unto his gallant men brave boys I'm not undone.<sup>41</sup>

This sentiment of Corcoran fighting until the last pervades lyrical devotions to his own war service, painting the image of an exemplar Irish American Union Army hero who inspired the diaspora and wider American society. At the Jones's Wood relief and recruiting rally for 69<sup>th</sup> New York families and early Irish Brigade formation in August 1861, the ballad *Corcoran to His Regiment* used Corcoran's singing voice to spur diaspora support for the American Union.<sup>42</sup>

Corcoran was likewise employed in early war ballads as a figurative example to inspire mobilised Irish-born and descended soldiers. In relation to this, several songs made reference to his capture and imprisonment in various Confederate holdings for thirteen months after the First Battle of Bull Run. His prisoner-of-war captivity was even referenced in more general, non-Irish specific songs, such as *We Will Have the Union Still*. Its lyrics expressed how the whole Union Army would 'avenge the insult' of Corcoran's battlefield capture and 'bring back' the Irish-

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Knights of St. Patrick should give Edward the same Order of St. Patrick he would receive across the Atlantic. This would 'make reparation to their royal brother for the plebeian patriotism of the 69<sup>th</sup>, who refused the Prince' in 1861, "Attention Sir Knights", *The Irish Republican* (Chicago), 28 March 1868.

<sup>41</sup> *Battle of Bull Run*.

<sup>42</sup> *Corcoran to his Regiment – Or 'I Would Not Take Parole'*, 'Words and Music by an Irishman' (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1861).

commander to serve the nation once again.<sup>43</sup> *Free and Easy of Our Union!* reflected similar sentiments:

Brave Corcoran now is missing,  
And his life hangs on a thread;  
Irishmen, rescue him if living,  
Or avenge him if he's dead.<sup>44</sup>

This particular general Union song also likened Corcoran to the first officer/martyr of the war, Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth who was killed in a skirmish with Confederates in May 1861 before the Civil War developed into full-scale battle. Ellsworth was the recurring subject of several wartime ballads. Corcoran was his Irish counterpart. *Free and Easy of Our Union!* (1861) strengthened this connection by telling Union society to 'avenge' both Corcoran and 'brave Ellsworth' simultaneously. This reinforced the former's place as a contemporary wartime hero alongside the latter.<sup>45</sup>

Through exchange efforts, his own refusal to take parole, contemporary accounts about his time moving prisons that appeared in Union and Confederate newspapers, and his later captivity memoir published during the conflict, Michael Corcoran's story was well-known throughout the warring nation. Songs also expressed joy at his return to the Union states in August 1862. For example, Irish-born soldier Richard Oulahan, who would serve under Corcoran in his postbellum command of the 164<sup>th</sup> New York, sent the ballad verse *Corcoran! The Prisoner of*

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<sup>43</sup> *We Will Have the Union Still*.

<sup>44</sup> This verse's final two lines bear striking similarity to the Wisconsin *Appleton Crescent*'s report about Irish recruitment, which used the phrase 'Corcoran, Rescued if Living, Avenged if Dead!' to galvanise the diaspora, *Appleton Crescent*, 10 August 1861, quoted by Ryan Keating, *Shades of Green: Irish Regiments, American Soldiers, and Local Communities in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 78.

<sup>45</sup> *Free and Easy of Our Union!* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1861). Elsewhere in this general Union song, lyrics sang about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's Bull Run actions:

Glory to those sons of Erin,  
Who fought with an Iron will;  
Told the Southrons what may happen,  
They were for the Union still.

*War* to *The Irish-American* the following month in September 1863. Its lines celebrated Corcoran as ‘the PATRIOT PRISONER OF WAR!’ who had ‘tendered his sword and his life’ to America, implying that the diaspora should follow suit.<sup>46</sup> Subsequent ballads printed on songsheets and sung in music halls celebrated Corcoran’s return as something that would bring hope to the Union Army. In lyrical form, it seemed as if the County Sligo-native would be a saviour for the nation.

For instance, John F. Poole’s 1862 *Pat’s Opinion of the Stars and Stripes* – ‘sung, with great applause, by Fred May’, one of New York City’s leading music hall performers – discussed skirmishes and battles during the war’s initial months. It also expressed how Irish-born and descended soldiers would ‘soon bate the blackguards afloat and ashore’, taking the fight to the Confederacy, placing ‘our flag o’er Fort Sumter...waving once more’ and capturing Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Irish American Union Army regiments would achieve this victory because:

Corcoran too, we’ll have back in the fray,  
With the Star-Spangled banner he raises;  
Sure, he’ll capture ould Jefferson Davis;  
And will wallop the rebels like blazes,  
An’ will die with the *Stars* and the *Stripes*!<sup>47</sup>

The *Return of Gen. Corcoran of the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* stressed this same message. It used Corcoran’s Bull Run example in 1861 to galvanise Irish soldiers in 1862, reminding them of this early war service. It generated the sense that war spirit would be enhanced once Corcoran returned from captivity:

‘Twas a the battle of Bull-Run, when first they met the foe,

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<sup>46</sup> *Corcoran! The Prisoner of War*, Richard Oulahan, *Irish-American*, 6 September 1862.

<sup>47</sup> *Pat’s Opinion of the Stars and Stripes*, John F. Poole, in *The Camp-Fire Songster: A Collection of Popular, Patriotic, National, Pathetic, and Jolly Songs, Suited for the Camp or March, Containing a Number of Songs Never Before Printed* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 67-68.

They charged the rebels with cold steel, and laid their columns low;  
 And while the Northern ranks were broke, mid showers of shot and shell  
 The Gallant Sixty Ninth still stood, nor flinched, but nobly fell.  
 God bless the noble CORCORAN, who led them on the field,  
 Against the odds of two to one he fought, but could not yield,  
 For CORCORAN, valiant CORCORAN, the bravest of the brave  
 Would fight to death, but ne'er retreat before a rebel knave...  
 Hurrah! Hurrah! for the Sixty-Ninth how brave they look to-day,  
 With gallant Corcoran at their head as if to meet the fray –  
 God bless our Irish soldiers, in our hearts we shall entwine,  
 The name of Michael Corcoran, and the Gallant Sixty-Ninth!<sup>48</sup>

Songs did not exaggerate this overwhelming sense of joy when Corcoran re-joined Union Army service. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* described the scene when Corcoran:

Returned to New York, where he has been received with the utmost enthusiasm...His popularity with his fellow-citizens of Irish birth or descent is unbounded; and is hardly less among those who are not connected by this special tie.<sup>49</sup>

One *Harper's* editorial went into even greater detail about Corcoran's return to New York. The tone of the piece was ballad-like itself. It emphasised how important a role Corcoran played in not only presenting his own personal exemplary American Union war service, but the positive light he shone across the diaspora:

If General Washington had arrived, after due notice, at Castle Green a few weeks since, he could not have been received with greater popular enthusiasm that which greeted General Corcoran...Who was this young hero, then, and what service had he done? The answer is simple enough. He is a Colonel who fought bravely at the head of his

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<sup>48</sup> *Return of Gen. Corcoran, of the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1862).

<sup>49</sup> 'Monthly Record of Current Events', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (New York), October 1862.

regiment and was taken prisoner...Why is this soldier, defeated in his only battle, greeted as the leader who had triumphantly ended the war and restored union and peace to the country? The reasons are many, but the chief is undoubtedly this, that, being an Irishman and a New Yorker, and one of the highest in rank who were taken at Bull Run, he was selected as the typical Union soldier in captivity. He suffered not only for himself, but the nation looked in his person, upon the sufferings of all our hapless friends...The people offered homage, in the person of Corcoran, to every captive of its cause.<sup>50</sup>

Corcoran was thus a selfless hero loyal to America, immortalised in song and through his actions on and off the battlefield. He was an example for how others should act. Such was his lasting impact amongst the Irish American Civil War generation that when Crowley described the Irish Brigade in November 1864, nearly a year after Corcoran's death, he referred to the unit's founding 69<sup>th</sup> New York regiment as 'the old 69<sup>th</sup> of Bull Run fame under Corcoran'.<sup>51</sup>

Songs written before and after the start of the war made it impossible for Corcoran and the 69<sup>th</sup> New York to be separated from each other. Even *Return of Gen. Corcoran* quoted above made this point clear. The two were forever 'entwined' in American cultural memory. That created problems for the way songs described both the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and Irish Brigade in ballads, leading to a cultural conflation between the two that suggests for soldiers, the diaspora and wider society there was no inherent military difference between the units.

Ballads such as *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* and *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade* emphasised this lyrical military license, with the latter even combining the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and the Irish Brigade together into a unit that never existed under the term '69<sup>th</sup> Brigade'. Such military terminology malleability suggests that for those writing and listening to

<sup>50</sup> 'Editor's Easy Chair', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, October 1862.

<sup>51</sup> Crowley to Flynn, 12 November 1864.

ballads about Irish American Civil War service, it was the battlefield stories and war sentiments that mattered, not nuanced details about accurate units and command. Indeed, by the time *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade* was written by F. Collins in 1862, Thomas Francis Meagher had, in the song, risen to the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia's command. Its lyrics described how Irish officers, including a veiled reference to Corcoran, praised the Irish soldier William who was central to the song's tale. He 'listed with bold Meagher, in the Sixty-Ninth Brigade'. At 'the Battle of Bull-run', William:

Conquer'd with each blow,  
With his bayonet and his gun, he laid those Rebels low;  
His Colonel [Corcoran] there beheld him, and thus to Meagher said,  
He's a credit to his country, and the Sixty-Ninth Brigade.<sup>52</sup>

When *The New York Volunteer* was disseminated on songsheets and performed at New York music halls by Sam Long in 1862, it expressed the city's eager willingness to send volunteers southwards to battle, including regiments and soldiers from its Irish population. It too combined the 69<sup>th</sup> New York with the future Irish Brigade and their formation as one of Meagher's units. Lyrics, however, held onto Corcoran for martial inspiration:

The noble Sixty-Ninth,  
Just see what they have done...  
Now, they are reorganising  
Under Thomas Francis Meagher,  
And they'll avenge brave Corcoran,  
Like New York Volunteers.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade*, F. Collins (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>53</sup> *The New York Volunteer*, Frank Spear, in *Camp-Fire Songster*, 23-24. Also published by James Wrigley in New York (1862).

These lines, and general 69<sup>th</sup> New York and Irish Brigade conflation, drew attention to the complex political wrangling that occurred amongst the diaspora's elite, especially in New York, about the formation of an official Union Army Irish Brigade and the selection of an Irish-born commander. Meagher himself initially pushed for James Shields to take command. The established Union Army general, originally from County Tyrone, had been resident in the United States since the mid-1820s, served in the army and gained fame during the Mexican-American War in the 1840s. A long-standing politician and commander, Shields was the grand old man of Irish American military service by the time of the Civil War and a natural choice for Irish Brigade commander.

As early as the Jones's Wood relief event at the end of August 1861, Meagher was busy behind the scenes to turn the event into a de-facto recruiting rally and establish an official Irish Brigade from the diaspora's main centres with Shields at the head. Six days before the gathering, Meagher wrote to Charles P. Daly to demand a breakfast meeting about 'this serious business with regard to Shields' that was of 'the *utmost* consequence'.<sup>54</sup> However, Shields showed no real interest in taking Irish Brigade command. He even had a letter sent to Daly declining the offer to command 'a Military Brigade, to be comprised exclusively of Irishmen' and recommended 'that all action in his regard be suspended'. The inference was that he was too old for the position.<sup>55</sup> Shields did serve for a time in other Union Army regiments during the war but did not command an exclusive Irish unit. If anything, the role of Irish Brigade commander would likely have been Corcoran's had he not been captured at Bull Run. However, with Shield's decline and Corcoran's imprisonment when the Irish Brigade

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<sup>54</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher to Charles P. Daly, 23 August 1861, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Corkery to Charles P. Daly, 13 September 1861, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.



began to be formed, Meagher jumped at the chance to take charge of its command in the second half of 1861. The role never sat completely easy with New York Irish American elites on the home-front who, in Ural's view, voiced 'frustration over Meagher's filling the vacancy left by Michael Corcoran's capture'.<sup>56</sup>

That frustration, however, was not heard in wartime ballads where Meagher made numerous appearances in Irish Brigade, 69<sup>th</sup> New York and more general songs. He often appeared alongside, or in relation to, Corcoran. Indeed, Meagher rarely escaped Corcoran's lyrical shadow. *Battle of Bull's Run* described the former Young Irelander as 'Meagher the exile, that death never daunted' who would be remembered 'from ages to ages...as Ireland's Son' like Corcoran.<sup>57</sup> By comparison to his fellow Irish-born commander, Meagher was not the specific subject of many Irish American Civil War songs, but when he did appear it was mostly with praise. All the rumours and stories of his drunkenness and dereliction of duty during Bull Run, Fredericksburg and other battles that have dominated historiographical accounts of Meagher's army leadership were absent from songs.<sup>58</sup>

Meagher played a leading role in McDermott's *Irish Brigade* epic Fredericksburg ballad. Like his lyrics about the Union charge up Marye's Heights, McDermott portrayed the general in elevated rhetoric, drawing on the image of past Irish chieftains rallying the sons of Erin before battle commenced. Based on stories of

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<sup>56</sup> Ural, *Harp and Eagle*, 89.

<sup>57</sup> *Battle of Bull's Run*.

<sup>58</sup> William Corby defended Meagher's memory, arguing his 'character, is, I think, not well understood by many'. He argued Meagher had 'the bearing of a prince...was polite and gentlemanly, even when under the influence of liquor', Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, 28-30. Meagher was a wartime alcoholic – circumstantial evidence and omissions from soldiers such as William McCarter (who served as his temporary secretary prior to Fredericksburg) add weight to home-front rumours. Secondary analysis often focuses on these stories rather than judge Meagher as someone who struggled with command and the horrors of war. In contrast to Corcoran, Meagher's wartime behaviour was markedly different. The former was selfless, the latter more selfish. Yet on the basis of contemporary song sentiments alone, another side of Meagher appears. Despite his character flaws, ballads portrayed him in an inspirational and uncritical light.

Meagher calling the Irish Brigade together on the morning of 13 December 1862 to galvanise its five regiments, *The Irish Brigade* described how its Irish-born and descended soldiers were ‘impatient’ as they waited for ‘their Chief’s command’ to charge the Confederate line. Then, in an almost mythical depiction, Meagher appeared as his soldiers wait eagerly before the fray:

A planet of Heaven is hailed in Meagher...  
 Now cheering with his bugle blast,  
 That gallant MEAGHER fleets swiftly past;  
 Through teeming groans, and clash and jar,  
 His trumpet voice thus sounds afar:  
 ‘Again to the charge, old Erin’s sons!  
 Again to the charge, and mount their guns!  
 Behold the Green! Think of its fame!  
 Think how your sires baptized its name!’<sup>59</sup>

Such rousing Meagher sentiments echo his various charismatic Irish Brigade recruitment rally speeches between 1861 and 1863, and repeat rhetoric heard in Irish ballads from the start of the war. In November 1861, to commemorate the Brigade’s formation, Thomas J. MacEvily sent *War Song of the Irish Brigade* to the *Irish-American*. He penned a verse that praised Meagher’s command in glowing terms:

Our leader is youthful, and manly and brave,  
 The pride of our race: and a lover of glory...  
 Then Meagher lead the way. We’re eager for the fray,  
 With thy spirit to cheer us we’ll soon win the day.<sup>60</sup>

As with Michael Corcoran, Irish American Civil War songs about Meagher presented him as a defender of the Union and someone Irish Brigade soldiers, the diaspora and wider society could praise as he gave his sword to defending his American home

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<sup>59</sup> *Irish Brigade*, McDermott.

<sup>60</sup> *War Song of the Irish Brigade*, Thomas J. MacEvily, *Irish-American*, 30 November 1861.

nation. Michael O’Riely’s 1861 ballad about Irish volunteers ended the song with a toast:

Long life of Colonel Meagher, he is a man of birth and fame,  
And while our Union does exist applauded be his name.<sup>61</sup>

Another O’Reilly, this time in the form of Charles Graham Halpine’s fictional soldier Miles O’Reilly, heaped similar praise on Meagher’s Irish Brigade leadership later on in the war with a passage in one of his wartime stories. Halpine recounted the fictional meeting of his Irish-born protagonist and President Lincoln at the White House in 1863, where Meagher was also present. Miles O’Reilly informed Lincoln that because ‘the poor boys of the Irish Brigade’ had experienced ‘days of its hardest fights under General Meagher’, their leader ‘ought to have two stars on each shoulder, or there could be no such thing as justice to Ireland’.<sup>62</sup> Meagher’s wartime service and leadership was used in song lyrics to reemphasise the American loyalty that the Irish role in the conflict highlighted. *What Irish Boys Can Do* (1863) used both the examples of Meagher and Shields to push back against any latent anti-Irish nativism, reminding American society:

In the present war between the North and South  
Let no dirty slur on Irish ever escape your mouth;  
Sure, did you ne’er hear tell of the 69<sup>th</sup> who bravely fought at Bull-Run?  
And Meagher, of the seven days fight, that was in front of Richmond  
With General Shields, who fought so brave for the Flag Red, White and Blue?<sup>63</sup>

However, Meagher could never truly escape association with his fellow Irish American Union Army commanders, particularly with reference to Michael Corcoran. In late 1862 and throughout 1863, Corcoran continued to be extolled in ballad verse.

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<sup>61</sup> *The Irish Volunteers*, Michael O’Riely (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>62</sup> Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 187.

<sup>63</sup> *What Irish Boys Can Do – Answer to ‘No Irish Need Apply*, William Sutherland (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863).

Meagher surely would have taken umbrage at this. Not only did lyrics keep Meagher away from complete association with the Irish Brigade, but also ensured that in cultural wartime song recollections at least, Corcoran was *the* figure of Irish American Civil War service. When the fictional soldiers of O'Toole and McFinnigan sang about 'the bould 69<sup>th</sup>' New York in the 1863 song *O'Toole & McFinnigan on the War*, it was 'Bould Corcoran leading us' who they focused on, not the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's overall Irish Brigade commander Thomas Francis Meagher.<sup>64</sup>

If Meagher was uneasy with his Irish Brigade command it never reached surviving song lyrics. No songs exist that discuss his resignation in 1863 or later war service in other regiments. Precisely why this is cannot be known. The idea that Meagher's depiction, and at times lack of depiction, in wartime balladry related to more critical home-front opinions of him is compelling, but it is complicated by the fact his soldiers evidently supported him. In many ways, Meagher was the Irish diaspora's equivalent of General George McClellan in the fact they were both revered by the front-line and criticised by sections of the home-front. Regardless, Meagher continued to play second-fiddle to Corcoran in wartime song culture. This was noticeable as Corcoran set about establishing his own Irish command and recruited members of the diaspora, including some of his old surviving 69<sup>th</sup> New Yorkers, for his 'new brigade of Irishmen who would preserve America' in late 1862.<sup>65</sup> Corcoran's Legion, as it became known, did not have the same war service experience as their Irish Brigade counterparts in the middle of the conflict. They mostly remained in New York and experienced a few Virginian skirmishes by comparison to the Brigade's involvement on major battlefields. Yet, that did not stop songs being penned in the Legion and Corcoran's honour.

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<sup>64</sup> *O'Toole & McFinnigan on the War* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>65</sup> Ural, *Harp and Eagle*, 110.

As with the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and Irish Brigade, lyrics about Corcoran's ethnic-Irish Legion – comprised of five New York regiments, the 155<sup>th</sup>, 164<sup>th</sup>, 170<sup>th</sup> and 182<sup>nd</sup> New York and with many Irish-born and descended soldiers in its ranks – appeared immediately after its establishment. Richard Oulahan, who re-joined Corcoran's service from the 69<sup>th</sup> New York to the 164<sup>th</sup> New York as a lieutenant, penned another ballad verse for *The Irish-American* in November 1863. Entitled *Corcoran's Zouaves*, it described the unit's positive mood.<sup>66</sup> Twelve months before, Corcoran himself had noted 'the health of the command is very good' when it observed Thanksgiving.<sup>67</sup> The former prisoner-of war seemed content to be back in command of an army unit, and songs about his new posting reflected this atmosphere. On the other hand, when Oulahan produced the ballad *Corcoran's Irish Legion* in August 1863, he noted with frustration that given Corcoran's praiseworthy early war service, his Legion could be put to better use. After fighting around Centreville and being camped at Newport News, Fairfax and Suffolk, Virginia, Oulahan's ballad verses described the Legion's quieter war experiences when compared to their Irish Brigade brethren:

Our Colonels chafe to see us pine,  
 Who know we'd all with them go...  
 They order us to Limbo.  
 So here we're doomed to swear and sweat,  
 On Bull Run's bloody borders;  
 Awaiting, what we hope to get,  
 THE GEN'RAL'S MARCHING ORDERS.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Corcoran's Zouaves*, Richard Oulahan, *Irish-American*, 21 November 1863.

<sup>67</sup> Michael Corcoran to Charles P. Daly, 28 November 1862, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

<sup>68</sup> *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, Richard Oulahan, *Irish-American*, 29 August 1863. Whatever Oulahan's views of his 1863 war service, his commander did not share this lyrical frustration. In the Legion's early days, Corcoran wrote to Charles P. Daly about how: 'the Irish Legion is now everything its most ardent friends could desire, and I am fully confident that when the

Oulahan presented a mundane Civil War reality that was absent in Eugene T. Johnston's ballad about Corcoran's Legion, also given the same title in 1863. *Corcoran's Irish Legion* focused on familiar lyrics of war glory, praising the fact that 'brave Corcoran our Leader is again to take Command'. The song was simultaneously about this newly formed secondary New York Irish Brigade and Corcoran himself. It reiterated the sense that Corcoran's war service inspired Irish-born and descended soldiers and volunteers. He was 'a patriot...loved and honoured through the land', echoing accounts published when he returned to the Northern states in August 1862. His reputation as a soldier who 'to a traitor he never shall yield' made him 'hated by his foes on the field'. Now back in Union service, he would again be a key element in battlefield fights against the Confederacy:

With a Legion of Irishmen, he'll bravely lead the van,  
And give old Stone wall Irish thunder;  
He never yet did fail; he is the very man  
To crush the traitors asunder!<sup>69</sup>

A similar sentiment could be heard in *Corcoran's Ball!* (1863). The song was a parody of the traditional Irish ballad *Lannigan's Ball*, well-known in American musical culture by the Civil War. On H. De Marsan's songsheet version of the ballad, the publisher noted how the song had been written by a John Mahon for the music hall performer Thomas L. Donnelly to sing 'with tremendous applause at the New Bowery Theatre' in New York. It encouraged diaspora enlistment to Corcoran's Legion:

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great hour of trial arrives they will do honour to their name and race!' Corcoran to Daly, 13 January 1863.

<sup>69</sup> *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, Eugene T. Johnston (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

Hark to his music, brave Irishmen all!  
 He spent thirteen months in a Southern prison, Boys,  
 Turning plans to get up this bail.

The song drew on Corcoran's 69<sup>th</sup> New York command, prisoner-of-war experience, and his new Legion, and thus furthered conflation between his old and new regiments. It again highlighted malleability when military units were mobilised into music and lyrical constructs. Mahon's verses depicted the Civil War as if it was a ball, with officers and regiments taking their turn on the conflict's dance floor. Once more Corcoran's:

Own 69<sup>th</sup>, who once fought so gloriously  
 That even the Rebels their prowess admired,  
 Are going again, and they'll surely victorious be;  
 For, there be sons with virtue and honor are fired...  
 Some of them passed many months in captivity,  
 Practising steps for Corcoran's ball.  
 Come to the ball, Boys; let us not linger now,  
 The music strikes up, choose your partners at once...  
 Away with you now, Boys! Your presence is needed;  
 Go with the man who would take no parole.  
 Irishmen! Let not his call be unheeded;  
 Make Treason skedaddle at Corcoran's ball.<sup>70</sup>

Even though there was no memorable hour of trial for the Legion under Corcoran's leadership in 1863, especially when compared to the Irish Brigade's involvement at the Battle of Chancellorsville and Battle of Gettysburg that year, the Irish-born general and American Union song hero remained committed to the Union cause. Corcoran intended his:

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<sup>70</sup> *Corcoran's Ball!* John Mahon (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863).

Course to be the same now as I always desired it to be from the commencement of this war, using my best endeavours to discharge my duty in such manner, as that hereafter I may have the consolation of a thorough conviction of having acted to the fullest extent of my ability.<sup>71</sup>

This statement best summarises Corcoran's mentality exhibited in his wartime memoir, writings and in the song depictions of his Civil War service. Unfortunately for the Irish in America and wider Union society, this exemplar Irish-born general, who devoted his life to America and the fight to restore the Union, who sacrificed himself at Bull Run, endured thirteen months in prison, returned, and formed his own corps of soldiers inspired by his example, died in December 1863. Corcoran, who once told the nation through his Confederate captivity memoir that 'dying for one's country is glorious when it is accompanied by features that strip it of its terror', never had the chance for a final heroic ending on a battlefield that would have earned him the highest honour of lyrical martyred praise.<sup>72</sup> Falling from his horse while riding with Meagher at Fairfax Court House, Corcoran's death was bittersweet. He was not a casualty of battle.

Ballad laments were penned in his honour but had Corcoran died fighting it is likely even more songs would have been produced. One *Irish-American* contributor sent verses to the newspaper in January 1864 under the title *Written On Hearing the Death of General Corcoran*. The unknown, possibly female composer sent the composition from Montreal and demonstrated how prevalent Corcoran was across the country and how widespread he was mourned.<sup>73</sup> However, Corcoran stopped appearing in later war songs. So too did the Irish Brigade and its composite regiments

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<sup>71</sup> Corcoran to Daly, 13 January 1863.

<sup>72</sup> Corcoran, *Captivity of General Corcoran*, 27.

<sup>73</sup> *Written On Hearing the Death of General Corcoran*, 'Mary', *Irish-American*, 30 January 1864.



as the toll of three years' war service began to impact the way ballads sang about battlefield actions in general. Sentimental rhetoric and themes replaced heroic frontline depictions across the musical culture spectrum, not just in Irish examples. The fall in Irish Brigade lyrical appearances in particular also owed something to the unit's decline in number after the impact of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. By the time he was entrenched with the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts at Petersburg, Daniel Crowley reported how 'there is no longer an Irish Brigade...Tom Meagher and the remnants of his Irish Brigade [were] buried in oblivion' as the unit became a Brigade in name only for part of 1864.<sup>74</sup> Yet, another Irish Brigade ballad verse similarly grieved for the famed unit's decline while also continuing to praise its battlefield service:

Our Brigade exists no longer – they have gone – the good the true;  
 Pulseless now, the gallant hearts that a craven feat ne'er knew.  
 They fell, midst the crash and carnage of the battle's cruel storm...  
 While thick and fast, upon their ranks, poured burning shot and shell,  
 With their green flag floating o'er them, they proudly fought and fell.<sup>75</sup>

#### **4.4 Irish Confederate and non-Irish Brigade Ballads**

In contrast to Irish Brigade examples, very few Confederate counterpart songs exist. Nor did the Confederacy have the same general habit of singing about battles even though they were often victors on the field. The fact that there are so few songs in existence about the Irish who fought for the Confederacy chime with David Gleeson's argument that 'the Irish did not have a huge military effect on the Confederacy'. The estimated 20,000 Irish-born soldiers in grey, and the additional second, third and subsequent generation descended men, were 'not enough to have a major impact on

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<sup>74</sup> Crowley to Flynn, 30 June 1864.

<sup>75</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, 'Bessie', *Irish-American*, 30 July 1864.

the war'.<sup>76</sup> By extension, there were not enough to have a major impact on Confederate wartime ballad culture, although as already argued, traditional Irish tunes formed the foundation of much Confederate music output.

Nonetheless, a couple of specific examples were produced. *Erin's Dixie* praised the fighting bravery of Irish-born and descended soldiers serving with Louisiana's Madison 'Tips' Artillery in 1863. This specific Confederate Irish version of *Dixie* described:

The Irish blood is high and red,  
It always flowed where Freedom bled,  
As now it does, it does in Dixie...  
Each battle-field in Dixie shows it.<sup>77</sup>

Additionally, one Irish-born Confederate general, whose blood flowed on the field at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, in 1864, was commemorated in a general wartime song that honoured the South's military leadership. *Our Country's Heroes* (1864) listed prominent Confederate generals, including the County Cork native Patrick Cleburne, who had a long-established military career in the British Army prior to emigrating in 1849 and settling in Helena, Arkansas, in the decade before the Civil War. Cleburne's lyrical appearance not only supports Gleeson's argument that 'the Irish in the South recognised how important Cleburne had been to their cause, as well as to the South's', but revealed how wider Confederate society included Cleburne as part of the Confederate nation.<sup>78</sup> The song offered 'three cheers'.<sup>79</sup> That, however, is the only song that makes such a specific reference to Irish-born and descended

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<sup>76</sup> David Gleeson, "Irish Rebels, Southern Rebels: The Irish Confederates", in *Civil War Citizens*, ed. Ural (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 141-142.

<sup>77</sup> *Erin's Dixie*, in *The Southern Flag Song Book* (Vicksburg & Augusta: H.C. Clarke, 1863), 20-21.

<sup>78</sup> Gleeson, "Irish Rebels, Southern Rebels", 139.

<sup>79</sup> *Our Country's Heroes*, A.B. Meek, in *The Southern Soldier's Prize Songster: Containing Material and Patriotic Pieces (Chiefly Original) Applicable to the Present War* (Mobile: W.F. Wisley, 1864), 9-12.

officers fighting for the Confederate cause. Overall, Cleburne and his Irish brethren in the seceded states never reached the same comparable lyrical level as their compatriots north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

In the Union, a few of other non-Irish Brigade regiments and individuals also found their way into song. Some would be very personal, such as *The Late Captain E.K. Butler*, written in commemoration of Captain Edmond Butler, 182<sup>nd</sup> New York, part of Corcoran's Legion. *The Irish-American* published the composition after Butler's death at the Battle of Cold Harbor in June 1864.<sup>80</sup> The diaspora's prominent newspaper also published a very long ballad verse about Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting around Fort Donelson, Tennessee, in 1862. *Pat Rooney and His Little Ones* (1862) sung of a fictional Irish soldier's experience as colour bearer, waving the regimental standard during battle:

And soon comes his chance,  
He heads the advance,  
With bold tread and glance...  
In Columbia's fight,  
Upon Donelson's height,  
In defence of the right...  
In the height of the fray,  
His flag's shot away...  
Amid carnage and flame.<sup>81</sup>

In addition, songs relating to the 69<sup>th</sup> New York included passing references to Irish soldiers engaging in battles beyond the main eastern theatre of the war. *The New York Volunteer* (c.1862) described how Confederates across the South would come to fear all Irish engagement in the conflict: 'the rebels soon must yield' because 'they cannon stand our banding'. In other words, the grouping together of Irish-born and descended

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<sup>80</sup> *The Late Captain E.K. Butler*, in *Irish-American*, 23 July 1864.

<sup>81</sup> *Pat Rooney and His Little Ones*, in *Irish-American*, 24 May 1862.

soldiers in Union Army service ‘in Maryland, and New Orleans, and down to South Carolina’ would bring secession to a swift end.<sup>82</sup> This sentiment implied the Irish would win the war for the American Union, a notion enhanced by the very title of the ballad *Save the Constitution*. Written and ‘dedicated to the 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers’ in 1862, this specific Irish regiment were depicted as ‘the gallant Ninth, brave and defiant, now organised in splendor’. As with their fellow Union Army regimental sons of Erin, this particular group took pride in the battlefield commitment, fighting to the very last. One lyric expressed in ardent terms that 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut ‘when in the field, they would not yield, in the ranks of dead you’ll find them’.<sup>83</sup>

The only other dominant Irish Union Army group that had more than one song penned in their honour during the war as the 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment, described by Meagher as ‘a stubborn Irish regiment, with its hearts as big as its muscle – proud as a true chief of some old Celtic clan’.<sup>84</sup> Like their comparable New York regiment companions, the 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania had their first ballad ‘respectfully dedicated to them’ after their initial mustering in August 1861. Written by Arthur McFadden, who served in Company B of the volunteer unit, *Col. Owens’ Gallant Irish Volunteers* (1861) sang about yet another ‘Gallant 69<sup>th</sup>’:

That will make the foe stand clear...  
[The] men are strong and hearty,  
No danger do they fear.

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<sup>82</sup> *The New York Volunteer*, Thomas Donnelly (c.1862), in Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 453.

<sup>83</sup> *Save the Constitution*, Timothy B. O’Regan (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, quoted by W.F. Lyons, *Brigadier General T. F. Meagher; His Political and Military Career, With Selections From His Speeches and Writings* (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson, 1871), 79.

McFadden also devoted lyrics to his Welsh-born commander, Joshua T. Owen. He was to be given ‘three cheers’ alongside ‘his Irish Volunteers’.<sup>85</sup> Originally from Carmarthen, like many of his Welsh countrymen Owen had migrated to Pennsylvania before the war. In command of the state’s second most notable Irish regiment after the Irish Brigade’s 116th Pennsylvania, Owen’s 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania soldiers obtained praise for their service at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Owen himself, by comparison, faced rumours of cowardice at the battles of Chancellorsville, The Wilderness, Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor. He was awaiting misconduct hearings in July 1863, thus removing him from command at Gettysburg.

In 1863, M. Fay wrote *Irish Volunteers – Penn’a’s Gallant 69<sup>th</sup>* ‘dedicated to the Sixty-ninth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers’. As with comparable Irish Brigade and 69<sup>th</sup> New York wartime ballads, much of the song gave a traditional broadside account of the unit’s enlistment, service record, campaigns and involvement on Virginian battlefields throughout the two previous years. The 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania’s Irish-born and descended soldiers, described as ‘Philadelphia’s adopted sons’, once again drove fear into Confederate hearts as ‘away the rebels run’ before their battlefield presence, promoting the song to sing ‘cheers [to] the gallant sixty-ninth’. Much of the song sang of the regiment’s war history up to that time. It is worth quoting this particular broadside battle narrative at length to demonstrate how similar in style and content it was to more numerous contemporary Irish Brigade songs, especially by comparison to McDermott’s *Irish Brigade* Fredericksburg verses. Starting with the Seven Days Battles, *Irish Volunteers* sang of how the 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania:

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<sup>85</sup> *Col. Owens’ Gallant Irish Volunteers*, Arthur McFadden (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, 1861).

On bloody fields we left our track,  
 When other Regiments falling back...  
 Right manfully we fought our way in one unbroken line,  
 And when our bullets were all spent, three cheers we for the Union sent,  
 And charging at the grey coats went, the Irish sixty-ninth.  
 And on Antietam filed again we boldly faced the Iron rain,  
 Some of our boys upon the plain, they found a bloody grave...  
 At Fredericksburg our old brigade, with Owens, who never was afraid,  
 As soon as the Pontoon was laid, we crossed in the first line,  
 And though the bullets flew around, we drove the grey coats from the town,  
 Such work is always done up brown [done properly], by the Irish sixty-ninth...  
 The cannons blazing shot and shell, 'twas like the gaping jaws of hell,  
 Where many a brave man round us fell, we boldly done our share...  
 The grass was turning red with blood,  
 And growing to a crimson flood, we still kept in our line,  
 Though many got a bloody shroud, as Philadelphia's sons we are proud,  
 And sing the deeds in praises loud of the gallant sixty-ninth.<sup>86</sup>

Yet, for all the heroism Fay portrayed about the Irish-born and descended 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvanian soldiers, there was another motive behind the song, one that went beyond pure regimental eulogy. The lyric about how Owen 'who was never afraid' at Fredericksburg was at odds with rumours of his cowardly command. As with songs referring to Meagher, the cultural image of Owen was one of praise. By extension, the lyric that he 'never was afraid' can be applied to his entire 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania war conduct. Reading the song in this light demonstrates Fay was making a political military point: Owen was a brave commander who fought to the last. Similar to examples about Meagher, the fact that songs did not make direct reference to Owen's alleged cowardly behaviour demonstrates how Civil War ballads revealed different

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<sup>86</sup> *Irish Volunteers – Penn'a's Gallant 69<sup>th</sup>*, M. Fay (Philadelphia: Johnson, 1863).

depictions and sentiments of wartime history compared to more traditional accounts, particularly in relation to military figures.

Furthermore, if Owen and Pennsylvanian references are removed from the two 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment songs altogether, both ballads could be altered to fit the singing and fighting examples of the Irish Brigade and the 69<sup>th</sup> New York. Indeed, the 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania were even named in honour of their more famous northern diaspora military counterparts. The fact that all these regiments fought alongside each other at major American Civil War battlefields engagements also provided a wider shared narrative that encompassed many of the diaspora's serving regiments. Therefore, stories about Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, to name but a few, were not exclusive to just the Irish Brigade. This only adds to the impression of Irish Brigade narrative dominance that becomes hard to escape.

That was ultimately the point of songs dedicated to regiments and singing the war history and service of Irish American Civil War units were making. Those on the home-front, and soldiers throughout the Union Army, could all be part of the Irish Brigade, and they could all follow the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's lead by extolling their example through ballad articulation and dissemination. If anything, Irish-born and descended soldiers actually created an homogenised narrative because they wrote it into wartime cultural accounts as especially heard in songs. *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* (1863) was one of the best demonstrations of this cultural mentality. Also published under the title *Pat Murphy of the Irish Brigade*, or the more traditional *Land of Shillaly*, 'Pat Murphy' was *any* Irish-born or descended soldier. When the songs sang about one nameless battlefield encounter and its aftermath, its lyrics were applicable to all engagements and soldiers. Even the Irish fighting in the Confederate States could share the same sentiments.

Although the song mentioned the Union Army's Irish Brigade, two of its verses presented a generic battlefield scene familiar to all involved in the conflict regardless of ethnicity and nationality:

Then, the Irish Brigade in the battle were seen,  
 Their blood, in our cause, shedding freely,  
 With their bayonet charges they rushed on the foe...  
 The battle was over, the dead lay in heaps,  
 Pat Murphy lay bleeding and gory,  
 A hole through is head, from rifleman's shot,  
 Had ended his passion for glory.<sup>87</sup>

Likewise one of the many 'Irish Volunteer' ballads echoed these same sentiments. It demonstrated how the Irish in America shared in the same war experiences as the whole country. Describing another nameless engagement and applying to all regiments, companies and brigades, Arthur McCann's *Irish Volunteer* (c.1862) painted a recognisable image of war service that did not necessarily have to be pertinent to the Irish experience:

In the fearful hour of battle,  
 When the cannons loud do roar,  
 We'll think upon our loves,  
 That we left to see no more;  
 And if grim death appears to us,  
 Its terrors and its fears  
 Can never scare in freedom's war,  
 Our Irish Volunteers.<sup>88</sup>

Of course, when it came to finding Irish volunteering soldier examples to emulate, one figure was elevated above all others in American Civil War songs. There was an officer who appealed to both Irish and wider American sections of society, and

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<sup>87</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>88</sup> *Irish Volunteer*, Arthur McCann (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, c.1862).



whose place as the ultimate ‘Irish Volunteer’ was cemented in 1862. ‘Written and sung’ by music hall owner and performer Tony Pastor, *The Irish Volunteer, No. 3* was adapted version of many traditional and contemporary ‘Irish Volunteer’ ballads. It sang:

Of a soldier, both gallant and brave,  
Who fought like a hero the Union to save;  
If you list to my ditty, you’ll know who I mean.

Seven lines later, Pastor revealed this gallant Irish Volunteer was none other than Michael Corcoran himself. Written in response to Corcoran’s return to New York in August 1862 after his prisoner-of-war captivity, on the surface this song was similar to others about Union joy that the Irish-born promoted general was back in the fray. Pastor drew on established First Battle of Bull Run history to remind audiences about Corcoran’s early war service, which the ‘you’ of the American public he was addressing would remember:

You know how he fought on that terrible day,  
When the rebel masked batteries opened the fray –  
In the midst of the battle was Corcoran seen...  
Nobly he stood by his banner of green.

Then Pastor switched lyrical focus onto detailing Corcoran’s captivity, drawing on information that had filtered back to the home-front about his prisoner experiences. Pastor’s song story would later bear similarities to the tale Corcoran himself told in his wartime memoir, reinforcing narrative dissemination between song and personal account sources.

Pastor stressed to American society that Corcoran was utterly selfless serving in the Union cause:

[He] showed...his heart was sound,  
For he shared all he had with his prisoners around –  
There the soul of a hero was easily seen.

After returning to the Northern states, Corcoran toured the main diasporic centres on the eastern seaboard, telling his own tale and galvanising Irish war support. His own words and actions, and the many lyrical references to him in Irish American Civil War songs, hammered home his example to follow. Corcoran was the literal personification of what Irish service in the Union Army was to be. Devoted to America, eager to fight, a proud representative of Irish heritage and American identity, it is little wonder he appeared in so many songs. As the cultural embodiment of Irish wartime service, he stood for all. Corcoran was *the* Irish Volunteer, and Irish-born and descended soldiers were Corcoran-esque.

Pastor's Corcoran Irish Volunteer song ended with the sentiment of renewed optimism that the general's return would benefit America. In grand lyrical terms, Pastor described:

A bright sunshine has followed the rain,  
And back in New York we have got him again –  
At the head of his Brigade he now will be seen.  
And as such a valor and worth he displayed,  
A Brigadier-general he now has been made –  
And the insults he met from the vile rebel crew –  
He'll pay them all back; aye, and interest too –  
Or he'll die for the Stars and the banner of green.<sup>89</sup>

In short, Michael Corcoran returned ready to face Confederates on the battlefield, with Irish-born and descended soldiers prepared to follow his example. 'His Brigade' was both the Irish Brigade and his new Irish Legion. By extension, in song at least, he

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<sup>89</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*, No. 3, Tony Pastor (New York: James Wrigley 1862).

was leader of every Irish man and woman as the diaspora turned to this most preeminent Irish American chieftain. Culturally, it was an apt honour. Corcoran had familial connections to far older foreign military legacy and fighting for causes greater than his own life. A relative of Wild Geese leader Patrick Sarsfield, all the songs about Corcoran, his 69<sup>th</sup> New York, the Irish Brigade and broader Irish military war service in the United States continued a longer fighting history. That tradition, alongside retaining a sense of cultural heritage, reinforced the way Irish memory of the past was sung alongside their American Civil War present.

## **Chapter 5**

### **‘Hear a Celtic Race, From Their Battle-Place’**

#### **Lyrical Articulation of Irish Martial and Cultural Heritage**

According to one *No Irish Need Apply* ballad, ‘sure the world knows Paddy’s brave, for he’s helped to fight their battles, both on the land and wave’.<sup>1</sup> Emphasising heroic Irish martial history, these lyrics related past military service to present Union and Confederate engagement. By singing about Irish involvement in the British Army across the Crimea, India and Europe, such ‘No Irish Need Apply’ response rhetoric ensured Irish military legacies were shared with the wider American public. The two strands of remembering and reinforcing Irish foreign military service and heritage combined to cement ‘the fighting Irish’ concept in the Civil War. As Thomas Francis Meagher expressed at an Irish Brigade recruiting rally in New York on 25 July 1862: ‘Irishmen...long ago established for themselves a reputation for fighting with a consummate address and a superlative ability’.<sup>2</sup> The Confederate *Erin’s Dixie* was blunter in 1863: ‘the Irishman is a fighting man, when fight he must’.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will explore the expression of Irish pride in foreign military service and the influence it played in volunteerism and fighting on the battlefield, subjects extolled in American Civil War songs. In addition, it will discuss the way Irish ballads produced within Union and Confederate military and domestic settings sang about broader Irish cultural heritage. References to Ireland, symbols of Irishness and the American influence on Irish language articulation all featured in wartime lyrics. The Union Army’s Irish Brigade in particular used the example of their

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<sup>1</sup> *No Irish Need Apply*, Kathleen O’Neil (Philadelphia: J.H. Johnson, 1862).

<sup>2</sup> “Cead Mille Failthe – General Meagher Recruiting the Irish Brigade – Enthusiastic Gathering at the Seventh New York Regiment Armoury – Speech by General Meagher – A Rousing Meeting!” *The New York Herald* (New York), 26 July 1862.

<sup>3</sup> *Erin’s Dixie*, in *The Southern Flag Song Book* (Vicksburg & Augusta: H.C. Clarke, 1863), 20-21.

forefathers fighting in eighteenth century Europe to generate numerous lyrical recollections in nineteenth century America. Tales were spread of the Wild Geese, the original Irish Brigade in the French Army, and past heroes that Civil War generals such as Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher emulated. As will be argued, the Civil War experience of Irish-born and descended soldiers added another page to the story of Irish foreign fighting legacy, as the warring United States became part of Irish cultural and martial heritage remembrance in the 1860s.

### **5.1 Historical Irish Foreign Military Service Lyrics**

Unsurprisingly, given the fact they were named in honour of their Irish European counterparts, the Union Army's Irish Brigade made particular reference to their martial past in the numerous wartime songs written about them. For instance, Irish Brigade ballads often included explicit lyrical connections between the American Civil War and the War of the Austrian Succession. Irish Jacobite exiles, dubbed the 'Wild Geese', could be found in Spanish, French and other continental armies' services through the course of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. This included the French Army's original Irish Brigade who fought against British forces at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745. The battle became the founding contest for the history of Irish Brigade foreign army service. It was sung about in subsequent nineteenth century ballads, including those produced in the United States. One of the earliest examples of Fontenoy fighting evocation appeared in Thomas J. MacEvily's *War Song of the Irish Brigade*, submitted to *The Irish-American* in November 1861. It included reference to the Wild Geese's flight and how the Union Army's Irish Brigade would remember past generations' service at Fontenoy:

Fontenoy! Fontenoy! We ring out with great joy,  
And 'remember Limerick', will come from each boy.<sup>4</sup>

Later in the war, after praiseworthy service on the conflict's major battlefields of Fair Oaks, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, the Irish Brigade was the main focus of three ballads which all drew on Fontenoy imagery. Kate C.M.'s *The Irish Brigade* (1862) placed present American war service in the context of the past. Lyrics sang about how Irish-born and descended soldiers added to former military glory:

You'll prove that no time can that name destroy,  
That you won by your valor on the plains of Fontenoy.<sup>5</sup>

*The Irish Brigade in America* (1863) also reflected this sentiment, singing about how the Union Army's Irish Brigade was 'like their noble ancestors, as in ancient days gone by'. The song noted how the original Irish Brigade were 'led on by General Sarsfield at the siege of Fontenoy', creating a confused ballad history that linked Patrick Sarsfield, the 1690 siege of Limerick and the Battle of Fontenoy. Sarsfield died over fifty years before Fontenoy. The lyrics should have stated 'the siege of Limerick' if they were to be taken as an accurate ballad account of Irish military history.<sup>6</sup> Written around 120 years after Fontenoy, *The Irish Brigade in America's* lyrics created a semi-fictional military past that the Irish diaspora could draw inspiration from, even if it was not historically accurate.

By comparison, Hugh F. McDermott's *The Irish Brigade* (1863) about the unit's actions at the Battle of Fredericksburg included the rallying motivation Thomas

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<sup>4</sup> *War Song of the Irish Brigade*, Thomas J. MacEvily, *The Irish-American* (New York), 30 November 1861.

<sup>5</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M., in *The Continental Songster: A Collection of New, Spirited, Patriotic Songs, for the Times* (Philadelphia: A. Winch, 1863), 58-59.

<sup>6</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America/The Soldier's Letter from America* (Glasgow: James Lindsay, 1863).

Francis Meagher gave before they marched on Marye's Heights. Adopting Meagher's voice, McDermott's lyrics sang of how the Irish commander rallied his men by recalling former Irish Brigade service:

Again to the charge, old Erin's sons!  
 Again to the charge, and mount their guns!  
 Behold the Green! Think of its fame!  
 Think how your sires baptized its name!

In poetic lyrical terms, the song described how the Irish Brigade's five regiments, filled with soldiers from New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, were infused with the spirit of their Irish fighting ancestors. Awaiting the charge against the Confederate line, McDermott's lyrics sang about how the Irish 'soldier's soul is a harp of joy', which was 'tuned to the glory of Fontenoy'. The image of Irish-born and descended soldiers brimming with pride for their Irish Brigade heritage was furthered by McDermott's lyrics that described how the soldiers wore 'green plums' that 'nod to the rising sun'.

Prior to marching out of the centre of Fredericksburg to meet the Confederates' 'bristling guns', Meagher ordered for each of his soldiers to receive sprigs of boxwood.<sup>7</sup> Father Corby recounted:

General Meagher advised every soldier to put a sprig of box-wood in his cap, so that he could be identified as a member of the brigade should he fall.<sup>8</sup>

The floral arrangements were more than just identification. As they placed sprigs in their caps, Irish Brigade soldiers called on cultural imagery 'to symbolise the Irish heritage of the unit', with the green boxwood acting as a substitute for unavailable

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<sup>7</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Hugh F. McDermott (New York: Frank McElroy, 1863).

<sup>8</sup> William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years Chaplain in the Famous Irish Brigade* (Chicago: La Monte, 1893), 132.

shamrocks. Furthermore, as Susannah Ural has noted, the ‘tattered green flags’ of the Brigade’s New York regiments had been returned to their home city to be replaced, so the five regiments marched under only one green banner belonging to the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, alongside American flag standards. ‘The boxwood would serve to remind friend and foe alike that these were Irishmen fighting for American union’, while also providing an ‘image of Ireland’ on an American battlefield.<sup>9</sup>

Songs about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment echoed their Irish Brigade counterparts by drawing on Irish cultural and military heritage to reinforce their ethnic identity. *War Song of the New York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (1861) made Irish-born and descended soldiers ‘swear [to] protect the Stars and Stripes’ and – in a repeated refrain at the end of each verse – promised that the 69<sup>th</sup> New York would ‘remember Fontenoy’.<sup>10</sup> This story was recounted in the lyrics of *Return of Gen. Corcoran of the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (1862), which sang about how Meagher drew on the spirit of the original Irish Brigade and the Battle of Fontenoy to spur on the 69<sup>th</sup> New York at Bull Run and Fair Oaks:

As at the charge of ‘Fontenoy’, our brave men of to-day,  
With gallant Meagher, drove the foe, in terror and dismay –  
For at the battle of ‘Fair Oaks, as at the ‘Seven Pines’,  
The Irish charge, with one wild yell, broke through the rebel lines.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to Fontenoy, songs about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York made lyrical reference to another famous battle that included Irish participation, though this time one that saw Irish soldiers fighting for the British Army and against the French. The Battle of Waterloo had double resonance in Irish foreign military service history as it involved

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<sup>9</sup> Susannah J. Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 125.

<sup>10</sup> *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

<sup>11</sup> *Return of Gen. Corcoran of the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>*, William P. Ferris (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1862).



Irish regiments and was won by an Irishman, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington. *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (1861) compared the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia's journey from New York to Washington D.C. to the bivouac experience of 1815 Belgium. Noting that when they 'pitched our camp' at the side of the road, Irish-born and descended soldiers did not complain about their surroundings because they following in footsteps of their fighting ancestors:

Without feather-bed or bedstead...

We laid down in the damp, my Boys, as Soldiers ought to do,  
As did our famed Fathers on the plains of Waterloo.<sup>12</sup>

These famed Irish fathers were revered in transnational Irish military history and balladry. Kathleen O'Neil's 1863 *No Irish Need Apply* provided a satirical commentary about how the French would have appreciated the Irish being barred from army service because their contribution led to British victory at Waterloo:

Och! The French must loudly crow to find we're slighted thus,  
For they can ne'er forget the blow that was dealt by one of us,  
If the Iron Duke of Wellington had never drawn his sword,  
Faith they might have 'Napoleon Sauce' with their beef, upon my word.<sup>13</sup>

Waterloo and Wellington also made a lyrical appearance in *What Irish Boys Can Do* (1863). Referring to fighting spirit, one verse asked society to think of how Irish military heritage might benefit the American nation:

Did you ever know an Irishman from any danger flinch?  
In fighting, too, he'd rather die than give his foe an inch;  
Among the bravest in the world are the sons of Erin's green isle  
Sure, the Iron Duke of Wellington was a native of the soil;  
And didn't he badly whip the French on the plains of Waterloo?  
Which plainly showed to the whole world what Irishmen can do.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

<sup>13</sup> *No Irish Need Apply*, O'Neil.

The implication here was that if Irish soldiers and an Irish general were instrumental in instigating one of the most successful victories in military history, then Irish-born and descended fighters in America could perform the same actions for Union Army benefit.

However, the Fenian ballad *What Irishmen Have Done* (c.1870), a post-war sequel to *What Irish Boys Could Do*, raised a contradiction that Irish ballads displayed in relation to recounting foreign military history. The latter Civil War ballad conflated Sarsfield's Wild Geese leadership and role during the Siege of Limerick with the Battle of Fontenoy. The former combined Wild Geese service *against* the British in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with Irish service *for* the British during the Napoleonic Wars. It also commented on Wellington's Anglo-Irish identity by describing him as 'England's honour...who fought at Waterloo'.<sup>15</sup> 'Wild Geese' as a term and diasporic identity do not appear explicitly in Irish American Civil War lyrics. Yet, they were alluded to as Fontenoy examples show. American wartime songs and the general expansion of encompassing all Irish-born and descended soldiers into one history presented a ballad version of Wild Geese sentiment that stood as a general feeling about foreign army service instead of recalling a specific conflict moment. In ballads, Wild Geese history thus became applicable to all fighting Irish forefathers.

This provides an interesting impression about how the diaspora learnt Irish military history from oral and written broadside balladry. Accuracy was muffled for the sake of singing an inspiring story. Even when *The Irish Brigade in America* was published in Scotland under the title *The Soldier's Letter From America* in 1863,

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<sup>14</sup> *What Irish Boys Can Do – Answer to 'No Irish Need Apply*, William Sutherland (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863).

<sup>15</sup> *What Irishmen Have Done*, Eugene T. Johnston (New York: Charles Magnus, c.1866-1870).

conflation of Wild Geese and Irish foreign military service was transmitted back across the Atlantic. As long as soldiers and the wider home-front community could be inspired by this military cultural heritage, *who* they were fighting for and/or against was not important. The lyrical point was that the fighting, and the honour and glory that came with it, mattered most.

Of course, the Wild Geese were recalled consciously with the naming of the Irish Brigade in America. They were also alluded to in the numerous ‘Irish Volunteer’ ballads circulated in traditional Irish song culture since the eighteenth century, and gave their name to several American Civil War songs. As David Gleeson has stressed, ‘the use of the term [Irish Volunteers]...had deep meaning for Irish soldiers’. The term recalled the heritage of ‘various Irish Volunteers’ in continental Europe who ‘had achieved glory on the battlefield’. Irish units in the Union and Confederate armies sang of their own role as Irish Volunteers as a way to embrace ‘their ethnic heritage’. Several Confederate militias and companies named themselves in honour of past Wild Geese heroes like Patrick Sarsfield, and Irish nationalist figures like Robert Emmett and Meagher (until the latter joined the Union Army).<sup>16</sup> One Union Army Irish Brigade and Corcoran’s Legion chaplain, Reverend Paul E. Gillen, even named his horse Sarsfield in a spur of equine emulation.<sup>17</sup>

The heroes drawn upon in Irish American Civil War songs were mostly battlefield military figures, not Irish nationalist ones. One exception appeared in *The Irish Volunteer*, ‘as sung by Joe English’ in Union musical halls. Its lyrics presented the perspective of a former ‘native of the Isle’ named Tim McDonald. He described how his father had ‘fought in ‘Ninety-eight, for liberty so dear’, referring to the 1798

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<sup>16</sup> David Gleeson, “Irish Rebels, Southern Rebels: The Irish Confederates”, in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America’s Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah J. Ural, (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 135.

<sup>17</sup> Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, 307.

Rebellion. McDonald's father 'fell upon old Vinegar Hill, like an Irish volunteer'. Fighting for liberty from secessionist treason, as the song described it, McDonald called on more Irish history to galvanise American Union loyalty amongst Irish-born and descended men and women:

Now if the traitors in the South should ever cross our roads,  
We'll drive them to the devil, as Saint Patrick did the toads.<sup>18</sup>

American-produced song references to St. Patrick and 1798 reinforces the fact that wider society would have been familiar with recent Irish nationalist and military histories.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, lyrics about past heroes' service were directed solely at the diaspora. When *Corcoran to His Regiment* (1861) sang of following in Irish military forefathers' footsteps, it asked Irish-born and descended possible volunteers and recruited soldiers to:

Think how your brave fathers for your freedom fought;  
Think of those bright deeds which Irishmen have wrought;  
Meet advancing hosts, boys let them feel your steel,  
And prove you're worthy of the land of Sarsfield and O'Neil.<sup>20</sup>

The emphasis on 'your' was aimed at the Irish in America first and foremost. Wider Union and Confederate society could draw inspiration from Irish military stories, but only the Irish could culturally and historically claim ownership and inheritance of that history. Only they could prove themselves worthy as the lyrics emphasised.

The verse above also referred to other past Irish military heroes – the O'Neills, Ireland's famed chieftains who led resistance to English rule in the late sixteenth and

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<sup>18</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*, quoted by Robert L. Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1975), 472-473.

<sup>19</sup> Alongside Fontenoy, Waterloo and Crimean War battles, the Confederate ballad *On to Richmond* described the Union's advance around the Confederate capital as 'worse than Culloden', *On to Richmond*, in *Virginia Songster* (Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1863), 59-63.

<sup>20</sup> *Corcoran to his Regiment – Or, 'I Would Not Take Parole'*, 'Words and Music by an Irishman' (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1861).

seventeenth centuries. Unlike Sarsfield, O'Neills made infrequent appearances in wartime songs.<sup>21</sup> They were, however, mentioned in the Confederate *Song for the Irish Brigade* (1861), which drew on O'Neill clan Red Hand of Ulster heraldry to describe how American Union soldiers would be cleared from the battlefield by Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting in the Confederate States:

The Irish green shall again be seen  
As our Irish fathers bore it...  
O'Neil's red hand shall purge the land –  
Rain fire on men and cattle.<sup>22</sup>

Writing this history into 1860s ballads helped continue an ethnic military identity that connected to immigrant home-front communities. It referred to traditional Irish tales disseminated down the generations, reinforcing transnational Irish cultural heritage. Lyrical references about this military past reveal it mattered to Irish writers, performers and audiences of these songs that their shared history was transmitted to the immigrant population. Additionally, this sentiment mattered to the Irish American Civil War generation, whose war service was also put into the context of more recent fighting examples in the two decades prior to the conflict, serving with the British Army across the Empire, the Mexican-American War and the Crimean War. Kathleen O'Neil's *No Irish Need Apply* ballad made reference to the latter, describing how 'at the storming of Sebastopol, and beneath an Indian sky, Pat raised his head' in the service of the British Army because 'their General said, "All Irish might apply"'.<sup>23</sup> Another *No Irish Need Apply* version, published in 1864, likewise

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<sup>21</sup> It is unclear which O'Neill was being referred to in these lyrics: Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone ('the O'Neill') or Owen Roe O'Neill. The lyrical conflation of both Irish heroes highlights the lack of historical accuracy in song-writing memory.

<sup>22</sup> *Song for the Irish Brigade*, in Hopkins' *New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* (New Orleans: John Hopkins, 1861), 14-15.

<sup>23</sup> *No Irish Need Apply*, O'Neil.

drew on Irish Crimean War service to stress how their victorious battle actions would be re-enacted on American battlefields:

At Balaklava, Inkerman, and through the Russian War,  
 Didn't Irishmen fight bravely as they've often done before?  
 As in this War their loyal arms have made the rebels fly,  
 So pray blot out forever, *that* "no Irish need apply".<sup>24</sup>

Song examples that made reference to Irish involvement in eighteenth and nineteenth century conflicts prior to the American Civil War contained vocabulary that would also appear in postbellum memoirs by Irish American soldiers. For instance, Major General St. Clair Augustine Mulholland, originally from Lisburn, wrote his recollections of serving with the 116<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment in the Irish Brigade. Like the ballads about their war experience, Mulholland saw American Irish Brigade service as part of a longer history: 'in every age, in every clime...in India, in Africa, in China, and on all the fields of Europe, they have left their footprints and the records of their valour'.<sup>25</sup> This was comparable to another postbellum account written by Captain David Power Conyngham in 1867. He argued that 'there [were] few battle-fields in Europe in which the Irish soldier has not left his footprints'.<sup>26</sup> The Irish-born chaplain Father James M. Dillon used the same lyrical rhetoric in his sermon to the Irish Brigade's 63<sup>rd</sup> New York Regiment during their flag presentation ceremony when they joined the unit in 1861. He placed their service in the context of an established history:

The fathers of most of you have fought in every battlefield, from  
 Fontenoy to Chapultepec, and their bayonets were ever in the van. Let

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<sup>24</sup> *No Irish Need Apply* (Philadelphia: William. A. Stephens, 1864), quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 526.

<sup>25</sup> St. Clair Augustine Mulholland, quoted by Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, 351.

<sup>26</sup> David Power Conyngham, *The Irish Brigade and its Campaigns: With Some Account of the Corcoran Legion, and Sketches of the Principal Officers* (New York: William McSorley & Co., 1867). 6.

it be said of you, ere this causeless rebellion is suppressed, that the soldiers of the Irish Brigade have emulated the heroism of their forefathers.<sup>27</sup>

Father Dillon likely repeated the themes of this sermon when he joined Michael Corcoran's Legion two years later in February 1863. The Irish general himself rarely drew overt attention to his Irish roots, which included descent from none other than Patrick Sarsfield. Yet, during the establishment of his group of Irish New York regiments in 1863, he noted with pride that they were marching on an esteemed Irish foreign service path. He was 'fully confident that when the great hour of trial arrives' his soldiers would 'do honour to their name and race!'<sup>28</sup>

Corcoran, Dillon, Mulholland and Conyngham's mutual understanding of fighting Irish heritage and its connections to contemporary conflicts was also reflected in a letter 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts soldier Peter Welsh sent to his father-in-law in Ireland. Like Dillon, he referred to Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting in previous American conflicts, including the Mexican-American War and the American Revolution. He commented that the Irish had 'borne a willing and formidable part in the subsequent wars of the country with England and Mexico'. This former service in past American wars would provide a justification for Irish service in the American Civil War. Inspired by past and recent actions, and by the wartime songs that sang of this history, the Irish in America 'rushed by the thousands to the call of their adopted country in the present unfortunate struggle' of the Civil War. By the time he was

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<sup>27</sup> Father James M. Dillon, quoted by Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, 296. The Battle of Chapultepec took place during the Mexican-American War in September 1847.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Corcoran to Charles P. Daly, 13 January 1863, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

writing in June 1863, Welsh observed how Irish-born and descended soldiers' 'blood was stained on every battlefield of the war'.<sup>29</sup>

## 5.2 Irish Language Lyrical Phrases

When news of Irish-born and descended volunteers' actions at the First Battle of Bull Run travelled across the Atlantic to Ireland in July 1861, one voice expressed sorrow at Irish battlefield involvement:

Poor Granu grieves unto herself, for those who lie far away,  
And numbered with the dead, alas! All in America.<sup>30</sup>

Granu – one of the many variations of Granuaile or Gráinne – was a figure of Irish folklore. During the eighteenth century, her presence could be found in Irish ballad tales that spread beyond the island through printed broadsides and the diaspora's maintenance of her cultural heritage. Granuaile's name 'became symbolic for Ireland and appears...in many songs' under several anglicised and Irish-language spellings, all which ensured legends about her 'were still very much alive, even in America' where her tales and image continued to be disseminated during the nineteenth century. By the time of the American Civil War, Granuaile appeared in wartime songs as the metaphorical embodiment of the old Irish nation, another female figure who stood alongside allegorical personifications of Erin.<sup>31</sup> Both were employed by songwriters to present a motherly image of shared grief and pride which Ireland, and the Irish in America, felt towards their soldier sons.

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<sup>29</sup> Peter Welsh to Patrick Prendergast, 1 June 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh, Color Sergeant 28th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, eds. Lawrence Frederick Kohl & Margaret Cassé Richard (New York: Fordham University, 1986), 101.

<sup>30</sup> *Our Brave Irish Champions – A New Song on the Great Battle Fought in America! On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 1861*, Thomas Walk (Cork: Haly, 1861).

<sup>31</sup> Aloys Fleischmann, "Granny Wales, and the Mulberry tree", *Isaiah Thomas Broadside Ballads Project*, <http://www.americanantiquarian.org/thomasballads/items/show/120>.



Granuaile and Erin's lyrical use were just two of the main figurative ways a sense of Irishness and Irish cultural symbology was maintained in songs by and about Irish American Civil War participants. While a pervading sense of American identity and associations could be heard in wartime lyrics, songs about the Irish did not abandon their old homeland country entirely, tying American military service to an established history of Irish involvement in foreign wars. If anything, songs reinforced a diasporic sense of Irishness, drawing on traditional images and symbols of Ireland – the harp, shamrocks, Erin and Granuaile to name a few. Indeed, considering the pride Irish-born soldiers took in their martial cultural heritage, it is unsurprising that expressions of their Irish identity found their way into the American Civil War songs produced about them. This went beyond simply reinforcing Irish ethnicity by setting songs to traditional Irish tunes such as *The Irish Jaunting Car*. Lyrics sang explicitly of Irish symbols and phrases familiar to those from the old homeland and within diasporic settings. Such allusions kept Irish ethnic cultural heritage alive in America and, through the proliferation of song sheets and songsters including these references, disseminated them into wider American society.

In addition, Civil War songs about the Irish also demonstrate a broad familiarity with the Irish language, particularly through the not-infrequent lyrical use of three phrases: 'cead mille failte', 'Faugh a Ballagh' and 'Erin go Bragh'. These Irish-language references could even formed the title of wartime songs. For example, Thomas M. Brown's ballad for the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts regiment *Cead Mille Fealthe* used the expression to welcome back the unit to its home state in 1864. As the title cover for the song's music scorebook explained, the common Irish saying translated to 'A Hundred Thousand Welcomes', an appropriate expression to sing to the returning Irish-born and descended 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts soldiers. Brown also used the

phrase in the body of song, with one lyric expressing how the welcoming Boston crowds who greeted the unit would sing ‘a Cead Mille Fealthe, our heroes’. They would give this saying to the soldiers ‘with heart, and with hand’.<sup>32</sup> The phrase was also employed in *Return of Gen. Corcoran of the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>*, which welcomed back Michael Corcoran from his thirteen month prisoner-of-war captivity with a hundred thousand Irish and American greetings:

A CEAD MAILLE FAILTHE we give to thee brave man,  
 Thou hero of the Sixty Ninth who nobly led the van,  
 With a hundred thousand welcomes we grasp thee by the hand,  
 And proudly claim thee, Corcoran, brave son of Erin’s Land.<sup>33</sup>

While a hundred thousand ‘cead mile failte’ references were not present in all Irish American Civil War songs, variations of the expression ‘Faugh a Ballagh’ appear throughout lyrical sources. Translated as ‘Clear the Way’, the Irish-language phrase had become a common Irish military iteration by the mid-1800s, originating with Irish soldiers in the British Army in the eighteenth century. Use of the phrase in the American Civil War added another factor to remembering Irish military service history which soldiers of Irish birth and descent in the Union and Confederate armies took inspiration from. When the *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* sang about the Irish-dominated 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia’s journey to defend Washington D.C. in April 1861, its lyrics drew on this old Irish military phrase:

It was our whole intention to go through Baltimore,  
 And if attacked there by a mob, we’d show them what we could do;  
 We’d shout them out: FAUGH-A-BALLA! As we did at Waterloo.

The song returned to the expression in a subsequent verse, referring to both the original Irish phrase and its English translation. Singing about the moment the 69<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Cead Mille Fealthe*, Thomas M. Brown (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1864).

<sup>33</sup> *Return of Gen. Corcoran*.

New York reached the capital and was reviewed by General Winfield Scott, one stanza presented a lyrical story about how Scott informed President Lincoln that the new arrivals came from a rich tradition of Irish military service. This, in Scott's view, would benefit the Union Army:

They marched us by the White-House, reviewed by Gen. Scott;  
He said unto our President; Now, everything looks gay;  
Here comes the FAUGH-A-BALLAS that always clears the way!<sup>34</sup>

As the war progressed, Irish American Civil War songs about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York continued to draw on 'Faugh a Ballagh' for lyrical inspiration. After fighting at the First Battle of Bull Run, *Corcoran to his Regiment* was penned 'by an Irishman' and performed at the welfare benefit and Irish Brigade foundation rally held at Jones's Wood, New York, in August 1861. The song could be sung in Corcoran's own voice, urging Irish-born and descended men in the country to join the war effort. Alongside recruitment propaganda, lyrics sang of using the war cry as rallying weapon against Confederate forces:

FAUGH-A-BALLAGH shout from the centre to your flanks,  
And carry death and terror wild, into the foeman's ranks.<sup>35</sup>

*The Irish Brigade in America*, printed in early 1863, included a passing anglicised reference to the phrase that furthered the notion of clearing the way as a form of battlefield military tactic. In the song's Battle of Fredericksburg lyrical report, the Irish Brigade, 'in six decisive charges...nobly cleared the way' as they participated in the Union attack along the base of Marye's Heights.<sup>36</sup>

A similar sentiment could be heard in *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, which contained a repeating chorus that extolled the image of clearing the

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<sup>34</sup> *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>*.

<sup>35</sup> *Corcoran to his Regiment*.

<sup>36</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America*.

Confederates off the battlefield. These chorus lyrics used the phrase as both a military cry and an inspirational mantra to galvanise Irish support for the war effort in the Union states:

Then forward! From our homes and alters, all we hold most dear,  
Our war-cry: Faugh-a-ballagh! Erin's sons will know no fear.<sup>37</sup>

*The Irish-American Army* (c.1866) furthered this lyrical image of clearing the way by again adopting the refrain for the song's repeating chorus. This example used the English translation: 'Then hip, hurra! Come clear the way'.<sup>38</sup> Irish soldiers clearly took the expression and practice of 'clearing the way' to heart, as revealed by the young Irish-born 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts soldier Patrick Kelly, who informed his parents in early 1862 that it was 'a fine thing to be a Faugh for [we] are bound to clear the way' when the future Irish Brigade regiment headed southwards to the war.<sup>39</sup> As the above lyrics show, the rallying war cry became part of Irish identity and fighting service during the Civil War and was extolled by Irish-born and descended soldiers through their wartime songs. These were subsequently shared with the wider Union community.

In the Confederate States 'Faugh a Ballagh' was sung by Irish-born and descended soldiers in the ballad *Song for the Irish Brigade*, written in honour of Irish Louisianan regiments' contribution to the southern war effort. In this song the image of clearing the way was reversed from Union examples. Lyrics sang of the Irish clearing the Union troops from the battlefield instead of their northern state counterparts clearing Confederates:

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<sup>37</sup> *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*.

<sup>38</sup> *The Irish-American Army*, 'by Corporal Barney', in *Stephens' Fenian Songster* (c.1866), quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 439-440.

<sup>39</sup> Patrick Kelly to his parents, 19 January 1862, quoted by Damian Shiels, *The Forgotten Irish: Irish Emigrant Experiences in America* (Dublin: The History Press, 2016), 119.

With pale affright and panic flight  
 Shall dastard Yankees, base and hollow,  
 Hear a Celtic race, from their battle-place;  
 Charge to the shout of 'Faugh a ballagh!'<sup>40</sup>

This sentiment was also heard in a general Confederate ballad produced during the conflict about how the Irish Celtic race inspired the South's fighting. *A Ballad for the Young South*, written by a Joseph Brenan in 1861, sang of Southern heritage and history. It included lyrics that praised 'the clansmen of the Gael' and sang of how Irish, Scottish and Ulster-Scots influence, culture and rhetoric aided Confederate nationhood and fighting identity:

The fiery Celt's impassioned thought  
 Inspire the Southern heart.<sup>41</sup>

'Faugh a Ballagh' inspired Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting for the Confederate cause. It could also apply to more general Southern secessionist mentality about clearing 'dastard Yankees' from the battlefield and political fields of the conflict. The concept of clearing the way was thus not solely an Irish military and diasporic one.

When the New Orleans-based printer John Hopkins placed *Song for the Irish Brigade* in one of his five-cent songsters, he included a pictorial depiction of Irish cultural symbolism that complemented the song's lyrics. It referred to the third, and most common, Irish-language phrase heard in Irish American Civil War songs. Above the ballad's title was an engraving of an Irish harp decorated with shamrocks, the two dominant symbols of Irish national identity. Underneath was a banner with 'ERIN GO BRAGH' emblazoned in bold, copying images seen on Irish regimental flags in the

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<sup>40</sup> *Song for the Irish Brigade*.

<sup>41</sup> *A Ballad for the Young South*, Joseph Brenan, in *War Songs of the South* (Richmond: West & Johnson, 1862), 25-29.

Union and Confederate armies.<sup>42</sup> Translated commonly as ‘Ireland Forever’, the expression ‘Erin go Bragh’ appeared in several Union and Confederate ballads. The phrase roused support for the diaspora’s wartime service and loyalty to their respective Union and Confederate causes.

This particular Irish phrase would have been familiar to American audiences by the 1860s. It appeared in the antebellum ballad *The Escape of Meagher*, written in 1852 and disseminated as a broadside in both Ireland and America. It sang of Thomas Francis Meagher’s escape from exile on Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) and his journey to the United States. When he arrived in New York City, Meagher was greeted by diasporic enthusiasm: ‘it’s plain to see, for Erin go Bragh, the sons they still have a grah’. These lyrics were not only drawing on ‘Erin go Bragh’ rhetoric, but also using further Irish-language references. The lyric ‘grah’ was an adaption of ‘gra’, meaning ‘love’ in this instance. Therefore the song was singing about the diaspora’s love for the future Irish Brigade commander.

This particular pre-war Irish ballad also included Irish lyrical references that explained how Meagher was ‘torn’ from Ireland and taken ‘away from poor Granua in chains’. Now in the United States, he was ‘an exile for life no more to return’ to his native land.<sup>43</sup> Here again was the allegorical image of Granuaile, standing for the country of Ireland that Meagher had left following his imprisonment and exile after the failed 1848 Young Ireland revolt. These lyrics indicate a sense that such terms and Irish cultural knowledge would have been known beyond Irish immigrant communities across the country. Indeed, one traditional folk song that included reference to Granuaile, *Granny Wales and the Mulberry Tree*, was written during the

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<sup>42</sup> *Song for the Irish Brigade*.

<sup>43</sup> *The Escape of Meagher* (1852), quoted by Georges-Denis Zimmermann, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs, 1780-1900* (Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1967), 242-243.

American Revolution. It was set to the tune *Old Gran Weal* whose music was ‘clearly...circulating in oral tradition’ of 1770s America. The song certainly had Irish roots as it sang of an Irish story and historical figures, and used ‘the spirit of Ireland...as a symbol for the struggle for independence in which the American colonies were engaged’.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, Granuaile had existed as a figure in American musical culture long before Meagher’s arrival inspired song lyrics that included reference to her.

In addition, ‘Erin go Bragh’ existed as a war cry within Irish American military culture before the Civil War. Its origins lay with the United Irishmen in Ireland and manifestations of modern Irish nationalism in 1798 in the United States. During the Mexican American War in the 1840s, Irish San Patricios deserters carried a ‘green silk’ flag with ‘a crudely drawn figure of St. Patrick, a shamrock and a harp’ on it, with the phrase ‘Erin go Bragh’ underneath.<sup>45</sup> This was much like subsequent Union and Confederate Irish regiment and army unit banners and the *Song of the Irish Brigade* above. Consequently, American audiences would have understood the inclusion of ‘Erin go Bragh’ in Irish American Civil War songs, including those about the Union Army’s Irish Brigade which often integrated the Irish-language phrase into their lyrics. As it sang of pride in Irish fighting heritage, one 1863 *Irish Brigade* ballad included the exclamation: ‘O lone harp of Erin! O Erin go bragh!’<sup>46</sup> Hugh F. McDermott’s *Irish Brigade* included the expression but tied to Irish Brigade expressions of American loyalty. In the Union states ‘the air is rent with a wild

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<sup>44</sup> Fleischmann, “Granny Wales”.

<sup>45</sup> Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 121. The San Patricios’ flag had the Mexican coat of arms on the other side, presenting a complex display of triple Irish, American and Mexican transnational identity and loyalty affiliation, Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 23.

<sup>46</sup> *Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M.

huzzah for the Stars and the Stripes and Erin-go-Bragh!’ the song sang.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, in the same year these two lyrics were written in the Union, a ballad about Irish devotion to the Confederate cause also appeared that used the same war cry as part of its exaltation. *Erin’s Dixie* included a verse that conveyed Irish and Confederate loyalty with bold pride:

For Dixie’s land our wild ‘go bragh’  
 Shall ring again – hurrah! hurrah!  
 For Erin dear and gallant Dixie.<sup>48</sup>

These lyrical examples of the use of ‘cead mile failte’, ‘Faugh a Ballagh’ and ‘Erin go Bragh’ reveal an attempted dual maintenance of Irish cultural linguistic heritage in America. However, their appearance was in the minority. The traditional Irish language itself, at least amongst the majority of surviving songs about the Irish American Civil War experience, was mostly limited to these phrases. Lyrics including other passages not in English are extremely rare. Even in instances where songwriters, including the Irish-born Charles Graham Halpine, would write in a mock-Irish dialect brogue to stress and parody the ethnic context of their productions, lyrics were first and foremost in English. Cases such as one publication called the *Fenian Songster*, where the songs were printed with bilingual English and Irish translated lyrics side-by-side, were uncommon in this era.<sup>49</sup>

It should also be noted that the lyrical examples quoted above all vary in the Irish-language spelling of these three expressions and were all presented in anglicised form.<sup>50</sup> This would have enabled performers to recognise and sing them phonetically.

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<sup>47</sup> *Irish Brigade*, McDermott.

<sup>48</sup> *Erin’s Dixie*.

<sup>49</sup> *Fenian Songster* (c.1867), MMIA.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Cead mile fealthé’ should be written in Irish as ‘céad míle fáilte’. ‘Erin go Bragh’ was the common anglicised form of the original Éirinn go Brách’, although there are other Irish variations. Likewise ‘Faugh a Ballagh’ had several alternatives, including ‘Fág an Bealach’.



It also reveals familiarity with a common Americanised Irish-language pronunciation. It is beyond the scope of this study to question what this reveals about the state of the Irish-language in 1860s America but these Irish phrases, both before and during the Civil War, appear to have found an established place within a transnational Irish American lexicon. As Civil War songs spread throughout the Union and Confederacy, just as with traditional Irish music tunes, these phonetic versions of Irish-language phrases were absorbed into wider culture. Their anglicised Americanisation presents another example of Irish wartime lyrics being sung with an American voice.

### 5.3 Green Flags of Erin

Alongside recollections of foreign military service, references to sprigs of shamrocks and boxwood, and smatterings of Irish-language phrases, the most visible manifestation of Irish cultural nationalism in American Civil War songs were the green banners carried by several of the Irish-dominant units, companies, regiments and brigades in the Union and Confederate armies. Song lyrics about banners provided stories about ‘the green’ flying over battlefields across the country. As *The Irish-American Army* sang, when Irish-born and descended soldiers ‘down Broadway...march’d’, having ‘the Green Flag flying o’er us’ generated ‘spirits quite uproarious’.<sup>51</sup> This lyrical sentiment was one repeated throughout the conflict as the diaspora mobilised. When *Lamentation on the American War* reported the news of the

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The multiple English and Irish spellings of Granuaile follow a similar practice. The lack of one standard Irish spelling (a common occurrence in Celtic languages) contributes to the myriad of anglicised translations. Various American Civil War lyrical differences reflect this linguistic custom.

<sup>51</sup> *Irish-American Army*.

‘awful battle at Vicksburg’ in 1863, the song expressed praise that ‘Old Erin’s flag on both sides hosied [hoisted]’.<sup>52</sup>

Flags and regimental banners, especially if they recalled a sense of Irish identity, mattered a great deal to Union and Confederate units comprised of soldiers from the diaspora. Marching under banner representations of Irish heritage strengthened fighting spirit. In his account of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia’s march before the First Battle of Bull Run, Thomas Francis Meagher described in highly lyrical language how Irish-born and descended soldiers would lift their eyes ‘in rapture to the Green Flag as it danced above the rushing column’.<sup>53</sup> Meagher later drawn on similar language during his Irish Brigade recruiting rally at the 7<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment Armory in July 1862, where he tied the green banners of the Brigade to the beginnings of Irish nationalist history. In heightened public rhetoric aimed at the diaspora, he suggested that those of Irish-birth and descent would see the Irish nationalist republican Robert Emmet’s legacy fulfilled and his epitaph written as they took to the transnational stage in the American Civil War’s fight for republican democracy, marching under:

The flag which flew in defiance from the walls of Limerick...The flag which Robert Emmet – the last of the consecrated martyrs of our race, lavished his wealth, his genius, his life...so that he might plant it high above the world, through the flashings of its emerald folds.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *A Lamentation on the American War – Awful Battle at Vicksburg*, P.J. Fitzpatrick (1863), *Ibid.*, 459-60.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, *The Last Days of the 69th in Virginia, A Narrative in Three Parts* (New York: Lynch & Cole, 1861), 9.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, “Recruiting the Irish Brigade”, quoted in *The New York Times* (New York), 26 July 1862. Mention of Robert Emmet’s name was met with ‘loud cheers’ according to newspaper reports. In his famous 1803 “Speech from Dock” Emmet declared: ‘Let no man write my epitaph...When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then, let my epitaph be written’. His words inspired Young Irelanders and Fenians involved in the American Civil War but he rarely appeared in contemporary American song lyrics.

The importance of the regimental flag as a symbol of national and military identity was a repeated sentiment throughout the history of conflict. The American Civil War did not diminish this. Peter Welsh provided his wife with a vivid account of the pride he felt when he was made a colour bearer for the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts on St. Patrick's Day 1863:

I must tell you that I have the honour of carrying the green flag...I shall feel proud to bear up the flag of green the emblem of Ireland and Irish men and especially having received it on that day dear to every Irish heart the festival of St. Patrick.<sup>55</sup>

Later that month, in response to his wife's less than enthusiastic reaction to the news, Welsh repeated his pride in 'the green flag of Old Ireland...I will carry it as long as God gives me strength'.<sup>56</sup> What is intriguing about this particular relationship to the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts's green banner is that Welsh was not Irish-born, nor originally from the diaspora in the United States. He was second-generation Irish, born on the Canadian province of Prince Edward Island. This reveals how being part of the Irish dominated 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts had strengthened a sense of Welsh's own Irish roots. His military service generated an Irish national identity that he expressed via his devotion to the symbolism of Ireland. In many ways, Welsh was acting out the words of one Irish Brigade song which explained that regardless of association and identity affiliation with other countries there was:

Still one [flag] you love more, of an emerald hue;

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<sup>55</sup> Peter Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 19 March 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue*, 79-80.

<sup>56</sup> Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 31 March 1863, *Ibid.*, 81-82. Margaret Welsh's hesitation was understandable: carrying the standard made her husband a target on the battlefield. By the time he was made a colour bearer, the story of the Irish-born Thomas Plunkett's heroic efforts to keep the regimental flag of the 21<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts regimental flag aloft at the Battle of Fredericksburg, costing him both his arms, was known across the nation. Welsh attempted to pacify his wife's concerns, explaining that the Irish-dominated 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts had 'been in seven battles and had one color bearer killed...he carried the national flag. In all the seven battles there was but two men wounded carrying the green flag'.

‘Tis the banner of Erin, ‘tis the banner of green,  
The emblem of true hearts where’er it is seen.<sup>57</sup>

Meagher and Welsh’s reference to the green flags of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia and 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts are in keeping with Christian Samito’s argument that ‘symbols and ceremonies’, especially regimental flag presentations, assisted ‘the formation of nationalist ideas by transmitting certain messages to an intended audience and bringing together expressions of public unity’. Thus the green flags of Irish-dominated regiments, militias and companies reinforced a simultaneous expression of Irish cultural and national symbolic identity while being raised in the service of the American Union and Confederacy. ‘Flags and flag presentations’, Samito suggests, ‘joined in a visible public way Irish American service, identity and wartime claims to inclusion’.<sup>58</sup> By extending, singing about these banners generated the same aural sentiment.

One example of this was *Cead Mille Fealthe*, which, alongside welcoming home the Irish-dominated 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment to Boston in 1864, also made lyrical reference to the unit’s green banners. The returning Irish-born and descended soldiers had, according to the song, ‘fought for the Union, the Ninth, and its Banner of green’. It also informed those who heard the ballad to head to Boston as the regimental emblems would hang in the Massachusetts State House on proud display in memory of 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts soldiers’ service and sacrifice:

Go yonder where cover’d with glory,  
Our State’s war-torn banners are seen,  
None tells a more eloquent story,  
Than the Ninth’s sacred Banner of green.

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<sup>57</sup> *Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M.

<sup>58</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 104.

A footnote on the musical score of *Cead Mille Fealthe*'s words and tune highlighted these lyrics even more. It commented how 'the Flags are in the State House', thus urging those who heard and performed the piece to go visit the emblems they were singing about. These Irish banners were placed at the heart of American national civic patriotic display alongside other Massachusetts regiments' returned flags.

However, *Cead Mille Fealthe*'s lyrics betrayed a deeper national identity connection also heard in Irish wartime songs that sang about devotion to symbolic banners. When the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment returned their war-torn flags to the State House in Boston, they did so along with their other regimental standards that mirrored the design of the Star Spangled Banner. As the song lyrics explained, their Irish flag was carried and displayed next to that of America:

The Sunburst beside the Star banner,  
They bore them through war's iron rain!  
Unstain'd by the touch of dishonour,  
Massachusetts receives them again.<sup>59</sup>

Although the emblem of the sunburst was part of Irish nationalist symbology during the Civil War era, it was a relatively recent development for contemporary Irish identity. Additionally, the sunburst's use in wartime songs was rarely singular. It often, as in the case of *Cead Mille Fealthe*, appeared alongside the image of American spangled stars. For example, *Corcoran's Irish Legion* (1863) sang of a banner that bore similarity to the image of the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts ethnic emblem, with the American eagle taking precedence over that Irish sunburst:

A song for our Flag proudly waving on high,  
The Emblem of the old Irish Nation;

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<sup>59</sup> *Cead Mille Fealthe*.

Its Glorious Sunburst ever shall fly  
With the pennant of the Eagle in station!<sup>60</sup>

Even more direct Irish nationalist rhetoric was tied to the more pressing concern of the day, namely that of fighting for the Union, and, although more infrequent, the Confederacy.<sup>61</sup> In the 1864 ballad *The Hero Without a Name*, lyricist Colonel W.S. Hawkins drew on an older tradition of Irish nationalist heritage in the hope it would generate further Irish support for the Confederate cause as the war came to its close. In a similar sentimental vein as Meagher's speech about Robert Emmet, the song recalled the spirit of Irish nationalists in 1798:

'Neath Erin's flag with its glad 'Sunburst'  
Was Emmet, who stands in that martyr-van,  
Whose blood sanctified the gibbet accursed,  
Where he dies for the rights of man.<sup>62</sup>

By comparison, the Union song *Corcoran to his Regiment* was bookended by beginning and concluding verses that likewise recalled a tradition of Irish past military service and cultural symbols of Irish nationalism. Lyrics stated Irish-bond and descended soldiers should:

Bear aloft that Flag, boys, Erin's glorious green,  
Foremost in the fight, boys, be our 'Sun-burst', seen,  
Onward with that uncrown'd harp to 'victory or death'  
The word, 'Remember Limerick', and Britain's broken faith...  
Raise that glorious Sun-burst, raise it once again,  
Let me see it shining o'er the battle plain;  
With its bright rays beaming, Oh, my gallant band,  
For God and for the Union of our dear adopted land.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, Eugene T. Johnston (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>61</sup> These sentiments will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>62</sup> *The Hero Without a Name*, Colonel W.S. Hawkins (October 1864), in *War Lyrics and Songs of the South* (London: Spottiswoode & Co., 1866), 69-73.

Considering how this ballad was first performed at the Jones's Wood gathering in August 1861, where those of Irish-birth and descent participated in an initial recruitment drive to galvanise support for the founding of the Union Army's Irish Brigade, the final line of *Corcoran to his Regiment* is critical. Despite the grand Irish rhetoric, it was 'for the Union' of America that the green banners would be waved.

Other Irish American Union Civil War songs presented the lyrical sentiment the green flag of Erin flying alongside the American national standard. *War Song of the Irish Brigade*, set to the tune of *The Star Spangled Banner*, sang from the point of view of Irish-born and descended soldiers who cheered when they hoisted the two banners of the Stars and Stripes and the green flag of Erin:

And we'll up with our colours, the proudest e'er seen –  
The red, white and blue, and the Emerald Green.<sup>64</sup>

Equally *The Irish Volunteer* sang of the hope that dual banner symbology would last forever, singing: 'may Erin's Harp and the Starry Flag united ever be'.<sup>65</sup> Another volunteer ballad from 1862 included lyrics aimed at American society to aid in this union of the two flags. 'Hail Columbia, rise and see' it sang to the country. Union Army soldiers, whatever their primary ethnic nationality, were all 'valiant sons of Mars'. Thus the country should 'let Erin's Harp united be, with your good Stripes and Stars'.<sup>66</sup> *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* was stronger in its vocal articulation of this banner unity, calling for Union loyalty and American devotion to the tune of *Red, White and Blue*. Its lyrics wished that 'Columbia and Hibernia ne'er sever' and that 'both to their

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<sup>63</sup> *Corcoran to his Regiment*.

<sup>64</sup> *War Song of the Irish Brigade*.

<sup>65</sup> *Irish Volunteer*, quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Songs and Battles*, 472-473.

<sup>66</sup> *The Irish Volunteers*, Michael O'Riely (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

colours prove true'.<sup>67</sup> Finally, *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (1862) expressed the same emotion that the two nations' flags would be carried in union together on the battlefields and in future fights to come:

Unfurl, then, to the breeze,  
The OCEAN HARP, the STARS AND STRIPES,  
On land or on the seas.<sup>68</sup>

This lyrical articulation of Irish and American flag unity was also repeated in Corcoran and Meagher's wartime accounts. Both provided pictorial depictions of their two nations' banners flying together during the conflict. In Meagher's description of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia's journey to Manassas in 1861, he recalled how 'the Green Flag was planted on the deserted ramparts of the Confederates at Germantown [and] the Stars and Stripes were lifted opposite'. The image of the two flags waving together generated an enthusiastic reaction, as Meagher detailed in highly poetical vocabulary:

The two beautiful and inspiring symbols – the one of their old home and the other of their new country – the 69<sup>th</sup> passed in triumph, hats and caps waiving on the bayonet points, and an Irish cheers, such as never before shook the woods of old Virginia, swelling and rolling far and wide into the gleaming air.<sup>69</sup>

While Meagher was relating what he actually witnessed, Corcoran went a stage further in his prisoner-of-war memoir when he described seeing the Irish and American flags united in his imagination. He conjured up this image while reading letters and snatched newspaper accounts detailing the exploits of his previously-commanded 69<sup>th</sup> New York, who were busy leading the way on the battlefields of the

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<sup>67</sup> *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862).

<sup>68</sup> *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, *Last Days of the 69th*, 6.



war in 1862 within the Irish Brigade and ready ‘to strike for the Star Spangled emblem of their adopted nationality’. ‘In fancy’, Corcoran dreamt of his soldiers marching under two banners, united in common cause and dual national identity. He wrote that in his imaginative visions ‘I saw them drawn up in line of battle behind the “Banner of the Stars” and the “Green Flag of Erin”’.<sup>70</sup>

Corcoran and Meagher’s portrayals of the green and the red, white and blue banners waving together mirror the lyrics of *Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade* (1863), where ‘the Stars and the Stripes shall be seen along-side of the Flag of the Land of Shillaly!’<sup>71</sup> Another Irish Brigade ballad sang of how ‘Erin’s Green flag’ had become ‘blended along with the Red, White and Blue’ by 1862. To stress this coming together, the lyrics of this Irish wartime song, like so many, was set to American tune, appropriately *Red, White and Blue* in this instance. However, for this particular song, it was just the start of a transnational unity between the two countries the dual banners represented. It also sang of a complication banner ballad lyrics presented when they established the image of dual flag symbology. *The Irish Brigade* (1862) contained a chorus that sang of a ‘long’ desire to see:

These flags be united,  
And on every hill-top displayed,  
Until Erin’s wrongs shall be righted  
By many an Irish Brigade.<sup>72</sup>

These lyrical phrases repeated that of an earlier wartime song, the aptly titled *The Harp of Old Erin and Banner of Stars* (1861). Although the majority of the ballad

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<sup>70</sup> Michael Corcoran, *The Captivity of General Corcoran: The Only Authentic and Reliable Narrative of the Trials and Sufferings Endured, During his Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Richmond and Other Southern Cities, by Brigadier-General Michael Corcoran, the Hero of Bull Run* (Philadelphia: Barclay & Co, 1864), 95. Corcoran, in keeping with his habit of paraphrasing songs and musical tunes in his writings, made reference here to two contemporary Irish and American ballad titles.

<sup>71</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>72</sup> *The Irish Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, January 1862).

was about Irish devotion to the American Union above all other affiliations, there was another sentiment being uttered quietly in its lyrics about a continual Irish and American military banner association:

Oh! Long may our flag wave in Union together,  
And the harp of green Erin still kiss the same breeze  
And brave ev'ry storm, that beclouds the fair weather,  
Till our harp, like the Stars, floats o'er river and seas.<sup>73</sup>

While less explicit than other examples, *The Harp of Old Erin and Banner of Stars* longed to see Erin's green banner wave over an independent Ireland. This was an extension of the mutual transnational hope for republican democracy fought for on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1860s. Yet, the lyrics also articulated the confused relationship between Irish and American identity affiliation in the Civil War years.

Such confused sentiment could also be heard in passages of wartime ballads that sung of Irish and Americans leading the fight *together* in Ireland under their united banners. When Kate C.M.'s *The Irish Brigade* sang about loving the banner of Erin's emerald hue over all others, it also sang about the defence of another banner first and foremost:

Yes, that flag you'll defend, if you're Irish at all,  
Into the hands of the enemy it never must fall,  
But our flag you'll protect, for Liberty's dear,  
Then you're Irish in heart, and a true volunteer.

At first, in the more Irish elements of the song's context, it is unclear if this flag defence would be for America or Ireland. However it appears, considering the ballad's contemporary wartime authorship and performance, that the defence was American. 'The enemy' here was Confederate, not British. Moreover, the final verses

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<sup>73</sup> *The Harp of Old Erin and Banner of Stars* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

of the ballad were focused on collective Irish protection of the Star Spangled Banner, ensuring that it would not fall into Confederate hands. ‘For the Union forever, with your last dying breath’ it expressed, cementing Irish support sentiment for the American Union at the song’s conclusion.<sup>74</sup>

Confused national affiliation language spoke of simultaneous Irish independence desires and pride in the American Union cause. It contradicted *who* would be conducting such a fight by implying that several different groups would be involved in leading this future conflict. For instance, lyrical rhetoric suggested that members of the diaspora – namely first generation Irish-born settlers – would leave America and return to Ireland to lead the fight. It also suggested Irish Americans – in other words, those of second and subsequent generations who felt affiliated identity and association to both Ireland and the United States – would be going. By a wider extension, as will be discussed in the next chapter, collective rhetoric about ‘our’ and ‘we’ in songs suggested that Americans themselves – both native born and the Irish in the country who had come to see themselves as Americans – would participate in future battles across the Atlantic. In songs at least, the latter identity appears to have come to the fore, thus contradicting a notion that only the Irish were concerned about, and wanted to bring forth, Ireland’s independence from Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century.

Irish American Civil War lyrical expressions presented and reflected this sentiment of collective dual identity association, whereby the Irish in America sang and saw themselves as Americans by the time of the Civil War. Thus the fight for Irish independence was described in American-produced ballads as an American concern and an American engagement. With this lyrical identity association

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<sup>74</sup> *Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M.

framework in mind, there would be repercussions for how members of the Irish diaspora, particularly those belonging to groups and networks that held strong Irish nationalist and independence views, articulated their sense of Irish nationalism in ballads produced by and about them during the conflict. Singing Irish nationalist sympathies and sentiments with an American voice raises questions about the state and potency of such views in the middle of the Civil War.



## **Chapter 6**

### **‘If Ever Old Ireland For Freedom Should Strike’ Singing Fenian Sentiments and Irish Nationalism Sympathies**

When the fictional Irish soldier Tim McDonald sang about how he entered Union Army service in *The Irish Volunteer*, he explained he had been ‘driven from my home by an oppressor’s hand’.<sup>1</sup> This was a reference to the recent troubles across the Atlantic in Ireland, where the Great Famine’s impact, anti-Irish sentiment towards British landlord tyranny, and a belief that relief for the country’s starving poor was negligible, were still being felt. The majority of recent Irish immigrants to the United States in the fifteen years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War had fled Ireland in the wake of the Famine, particularly between 1845 and 1852, and failed nationalist insurrection in 1848. For those first-generation Irish immigrants who could remember Ireland in its darkest period, resentment towards Britain still lingered and stoked some Irish nationalist sympathies in the United States in the 1860s, even as they participated in the American Civil War.

For the diaspora, the United States provided a welcoming home where its ideals of liberty, democracy and republican nationhood appealed to those holding Irish nationalist independence desires and anti-British sentiment. In one letter to his wife in 1863, Peter Welsh pondered what would have happened to the Irish if they had not been able to come to America:

What would be the condition today of hundreds of thousands of the sons and daughters of the poor oppressed old Erin if they had not a free land like this to emigrate to. Famine and misery staring them in the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*, quoted by Robert L. Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1975). When the South seceded, McDonald headed ‘to a recruiting-office...that happened to be near, and joined the good old “Sixty-ninth”, like an Irish volunteer’. This was a reference to the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia.

face...Famine...the result of tyrannical laws and damnable oppression.<sup>2</sup>

Although Welsh, as second-generation migrant, had no direct experience of the Famine or life in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century, he shared in the Irish anti-British sentiment heard in America.<sup>3</sup> He argued that ‘no other spot on the face of the earth was such tyranny and treachery practised as in Ireland by its villainous rulers’ than Britain.<sup>4</sup> Welsh had grown up in North America, and saw the United States as ‘a national asylum which is superior to any the world had yet known’. In many ways for him, and his fellow Irish brethren in the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment, serving in the war paid back the debt of thanks the diaspora felt towards their American homeland for offering sanctuary.

Such sentiments were not heard frequently in Irish American Civil War songs. The passage of over a decade since the principal Famine migration, and general diffusion of that recent history into the diaspora’s establishment of the initial American chapters to their story, meant that specific recollections of this past was muted in war ballads. Nonetheless, ardent anti-British sentiment did occasionally find

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 3 February 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh, Color Sergeant 28th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, eds. Lawrence Frederick Kohl & Margaret Cassé Richard (New York: Fordham University, 1986), 64.

<sup>3</sup> Sentiments about the impact of the Famine Irish suffering in Ireland and anti-British hostility were not uncommon during the Civil War era. They were expressed by first generation migrants who could remember and experienced the events of 1845-1852, their children who were also born in Ireland in the same period, and those of second-generation decent, born at the same time or older, on mostly equal basis. Welsh’s stance would have likely come from his memory of hearing about what had happened, and the influence of disseminated contemporary opinions by Young Ireland exiles, such as John Mitchel, who kept the argument that Britain was to blame in Irish transnational discourse. Studies on the Irish diaspora’s inter-generational memory transmission reveal how attitudes, history and experiences were held on to and passed down to subsequent generations, even when direct lived experience of events passed away. For example, see John Herson’s work on the Irish in Britain over five generations and one hundred years, and the central role family played in shaping generational lives, identity, memory making and community family history knowledge, John Herson, *Divergent Paths: Family Histories of Irish Emigrants in Britain, 1820-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Peter Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 3 February 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue*, 67.

its way into songs, a reminder that migration did not necessarily dampen this feeling, especially when tied to expressions about a future fight for Irish independence. This chapter will analyse the way Irish American Civil War songs expressed specific Fenian Irish independence support and sentiments, focusing on lyrical references about the Irish nationalist group that had been founded in the United States prior to the American Civil War in 1858 by John O'Mahony and Michael Dohney. It will also assess more general sympathies about Irish nationalism and future hopes for Ireland's independence from Britain. Irish wartime ballads did not shy away from singing about nationalist expressions, although these were secondary to the conflict. Furthermore, this chapter will demonstrate how lyrics about Irish nationalist aspirations were tied closely to American concerns, raising questions about the very nature of Irish nationalism sympathy, support and Fenian attitudes towards independence in the context of the Civil War.

### 6.1 Irish Independence Sympathies in America

When it was published on both sides of the Atlantic in 1863, *The Irish Brigade in America* repeated the view previously presented by Tim MacDonald in *The Irish Volunteer*. Sung from an Irish point of view in the American home-front, it explained how recent Irish migrants had come to their new nation:

It was the cursed landlords' tyranny that forced them from their home,  
To cross the fierce Atlantic, in foreign lands to roam.  
John Bull's deception is found out, but he yet may see the day,  
That Paddy's sons, with sword and gun, will show him Irish play.<sup>5</sup>

These sentiments also sometimes materialised within the context of songs that appeared initially to be about Irish war service. The best example of this was by

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<sup>5</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America/The Soldier's Letter from America* (Glasgow: James Lindsay, 1863).



lyricist F. Collins, who produced *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade* in 1862. Unlike any other song in this study, after singing about fighting in the war, the verses in the second half turned into protracted vitriol about the past twenty years of Irish history and Ireland's relationship to Britain during the Famine.

Whereas *The Irish Jaunting Car* had sung about Queen Victoria's visit to Ireland in 1849 in jovial terms, Collins was far more critical of the monarch's response to the potato blight crisis, and ended with a threat that Irish American Civil War soldiers would soon be paying her a visit of their own. Directed at Ireland itself, one verse sang:

Were [Victoria] to come among you, on a visit every day,  
Do not pay attention nor give heed to what she'll say;  
She's trembling in her skin, she's so very much afraid,  
She'll shortly get a visit from the Sixty-Ninth Brigade.

The song then went on to criticise Victoria's lack of immediate response to the Famine. Here the monarch being put to use both as a lyrical representation of herself and, by proxy, Westminster and the British state. All were culpable in abandoning Ireland according to the ballad:

When hunger death and famine, sent one million to their grave,  
She did not come among you then, their precious lives to save,  
She made up a subscription and sent you fifty pounds,  
Wasn't that a blessed offering from the British royal crown.<sup>6</sup>

This was a reference to the widely-held myth of Victoria's Irish Famine relief donation, which in reality was around two thousand pounds not the fifty mentioned by the song.

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<sup>6</sup> *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade*, F. Collins (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

During the Civil War itself, Famine relief continued to be a pressing concern and the diaspora in both the Union and Confederacy routinely gathered money for Ireland. One of the largest fundraising drives that involved the Irish-born and descended soldiers sung about in Civil War songs took place in the middle of the conflict. First instigated by prominent members of the Irish American community at Delmonico's Hotel in New York 'for the purpose of inaugurating a relief fund for the suffering Poor of Ireland', Irish Brigade regiments collected as much as they could in spring 1863.<sup>7</sup> Father William Corby wrote a letter to New York's Archbishop John Hughes with an enclosed contribution of over one thousand dollars given by 'a portion of the officers and men of two regiments of this brigade...to the fund now being raised for the relief of the suffering poor of Ireland'. Even though the Irish Brigade was much diminished by this point in the conflict, Corby noted with some pride that 'the remaining few of the Irish Brigade have spontaneously, and without any concert of action, come forward to contribute their mite to the general subscription'.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Michael Corcoran was raising money within his regiments as 'part of the contribution for the relief of Ireland'. Corcoran entrusted John O'Mahony, the leader of the Fenian Brotherhood, with 'several packages of money to be deposited' with the relief fund organisers.<sup>9</sup>

Monetary aid for those affected by the Famine was one notable contribution, but another was referred to regularly in wartime ballads: the fighting contribution made by the soldiers themselves. *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade*'s final verse repeated its threat about how Britain would receive a visit from Irish-born and descended soldiers once

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<sup>7</sup> New York Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Invitation, 24 March 1863, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

<sup>8</sup> William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years Chaplain in the Famous Irish Brigade* (Chicago: La Monte, 1893), 147.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Corcoran to Charles P. Daly, 13 May 1863, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

the Civil War was over. They would return to Ireland as a triumphant Irish Brigade led by their Irish American generals, Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher. The song claimed that after they achieved Union victory, they would bring forth Ireland's independence:

The day is fast approaching, that all the world can see,  
That there must be a total end to British tyranny;  
Corcoran and brave Meagher, whose deeds shall never fade  
Will free Erin's sons and daughter's with the Sixty-Ninth Brigade.

Among those who would serve with this unit was the soldier whose 'voice' was singing the song's lyrics. Collins began the ballad from the perspective of a woman on the Union home-front, who detailed what her 'true love William' experienced in the war. As the second half of the ballad turned towards Ireland, William took up the singing tale and explained:

If this war was over, I'd leave you but once more,  
That would be to cross the sea, to Erin's lovely shore;  
To put an end for ever to the landlord's crow-bar brigade  
Under the gallant leaders, of the Sixty-Ninth Brigade.<sup>10</sup>

*The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade* was reflective of nationalist sympathetic sentiments that appeared in some, though by no means all, Irish American Civil War songs. One version of the traditional ballad *St. Patrick's Day* produced in America around the end of the conflict in 1865 contained concluding verses that turned attention back to Ireland. Like *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade*, it hoped the famed 69<sup>th</sup> New York Irish would return to their old homeland:

Wish for the time, when with the Sixty-Ninth,  
To land in old Ireland, on St. Patrick's Day.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade*.

<sup>11</sup> *St. Patrick's Day* (New York: James Wrigley, c.1865).

The notion of Union Army Irish regiments and soldiers returning to fight for independence under the command of their leaders was also expressed in one Irish volunteer ballad written at the start of the conflict in 1861, before many of the heroics and battlefield glory of Irish-born and descended soldiers had been memorialised in song. Nevertheless, *The Irish Volunteers* (1862) was already looking forward to war's end, when the Irish veterans of the Civil War would return to Ireland. The bright prospects of Irish independence would be achieved under Meagher's leadership:

Long life to Colonel Meagher, he is a man of birth and fame  
 And while our Union does exist applauded be his name.  
 Our land once more to peace restored, and brighter prospects near  
 We will not lack to welcome back, the Irish Volunteers.<sup>12</sup>

The verse's rhetoric can be understood in two ways – 'our land' meant America and Irish volunteer soldiers aiding the restoration of the American Union. The 'we' in the final line, however, had a dual association. To those in the Union home-front it meant the collective 'we' of the American nation, welcoming back all soldiers after victory. They were alongside the 'we' of the diaspora who could take pride in the loyal fighting service performed by Irish-born and descended fighting under Meagher, which at this early stage of the Civil War would have meant the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia and, even more specifically, his company of Zouaves raised to before the First Battle of Bull Run. The 'we' could also mean Ireland as the country herself would 'welcome back' her fighting sons when the Civil War was over. This is an uncommon example of lyrical messages adopting parallel meanings depending on who was performing and listening to the song as it sang to both the Irish in America and wider American society.

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<sup>12</sup> *The Irish Volunteers*, Michael O'Riely (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

Most lyrical references to the American Civil War Irish returning to fight for independence were far more direct in their language about this hopeful postbellum plan. *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* was particularly direct, with the eponymous Pat singing that he would rather be fighting the British in 1863 armed with his 'shillaly', or Irish wooden fighting stick. Though the song did not diminish the fighting spirit of the Irish, Pat's view implied that they would fight better if the enemy was not Confederate:

Now, if it was only John Bull to the fore,  
I'd rush into battle quite gaily;  
For the spalpeen [rascal] I'd rap with a heart an' a half,  
With my elegant Sprig of Shillaly.<sup>13</sup>

This sentiment was one shared by the young 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts soldier Daniel Crowley in the final few months of the war as he and his fellow Irish-born and descended soldiers laid siege to Petersburg, Virginia. One night in September 1864 he 'had a little chat' with a Confederate soldier across the entrenchments. His new Confederate companion 'said he was an Irishman'. After engaging in a mutual enquiry about when they had 'left the old land', if they heard news 'from there and how things were looking at present' in Ireland, the Confederate Irish soldier began to discuss the forthcoming 1864 presidential election. 'He expects when McClellan is elected President there will be peace', Crowley reported. This peace would bring with it a new fight, this time in Ireland. 'We will all have a chance of trying our mettle for the old sod' according to the Confederate Irishman. Crowley stated that he hoped that

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<sup>13</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

‘day is not far distant’. Like the fictional Pat Murphy, Crowley commented that ‘I would rather spill my blood in that cause than in the present one’.<sup>14</sup>

It was not just Irish Brigade soldiers who sang and spoke of their sympathies and support for Irish independence and the possible hope of one day returning to fight against Britain. Timothy O’Regan’s *Save the Constitution* (1862) about the Irish 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers also discussed Ireland’s future independence. The song’s final verse, expressed the lyrical sentiments of the Irish-born and descended 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut soldiers’ desire for peace and Union restoration. Calling again on the symbology of the Irish green flag, the song sang of the expectation that Irish American Civil War soldiers would aid in the fight and victory against British rule in Ireland:

When peace once more will bless this shore for what it was intended,  
 When trade and commerce will revive and civil war is ended;  
 Oh steer your barks to Erin’s Isle, whose proud soul is kept under,  
 To rise her Green flag to the breeze and burst her claims asunder.<sup>15</sup>

It is worth noting that despite this longing for Irish independence and a sense that it would follow the conclusion of the American Civil War, most lyrics sympathetic to this happening placed it in the future. Returning to fight for Irish independence, and actually achieving it, was not necessarily immediate. Crowley’s wish for a ‘not far distant’ fight for independence was not supported by the lyrical examples quoted above. All were produced during the conflict at times when fighting and secession looked far from finished.

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel Crowley to Cornelius Flynn, 29 September 1864, Daniel Crowley Letters to Cornelius Flynn, BA.

<sup>15</sup> *Save the Constitution*, Timothy B. O’Regan (New York: James Wrigley, 1862). There is no indication O’Regan had 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteer connections.

In these cases, Irish independence would come after the Union was restored and, as *Save the Constitution* indicated, peace returned to the whole of the United States. That did not solely imply an end to fighting. It meant reconciliation and reconstruction, with the Irish in America being involved in both processes. Placing Irish independence in a lyrical future like this was also a suggestion made by Peter Welsh when he wrote to his father-in-law in Ireland in mid-1863: ‘if the day should arrive within ten years after this war is ended an army can be raised in this country that will strike terror to the Saxon’s heart’.<sup>16</sup> While he thought a possible invasion and fight for Irish independence would happen one day, this was not an immediate possibility. A full decade would pass before such a feasible plan enacted in Welsh’s view. Given this was highlighted long before the war looked like it would end, the start of that decade’s worth of waiting for independence was also far in the future. This raises a question about how supportive of realistic Irish independence plans those sympathetic to nationalist beliefs were. An air of doubt around this issue could be heard in Irish – and particularly Fenian – wartime ballads.

## 6.2 The Fenian Brotherhood

In Illinois’ *Ottawa Free Trader* in November 1863, five years after their founding, the Fenian Brotherhood in the United States was described as a group that was:

An organisation of Irishmen of a secret and military character, whose members are pledged to strike for the independence of Ireland whenever an opportunity arises...In the United States they are numbered by hundreds of thousands...[with] representatives from all parts of the United States, Canada and Ireland.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Peter Welsh to Patrick Prendergast, 1 June 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue*, 103.

<sup>17</sup> *The Ottawa Free Trader* (Illinois), 28 November 1863. The report detailed the events of the Fenians’ first national convention and noted how attendees swore allegiance ‘to the Constitution and laws of the United States of America’ alongside voicing Union support, Fenian Congress Resolution, Chicago, November 1863, quoted by William D. Griffin, ed.,

Due to their overlapping years and their continued appearance in all historiographies of the mid-nineteenth century Irish in America, the Fenians are impossible to ignore in relation to Irish American Civil War studies. Susannah Ural stresses that it is important not to overemphasize ‘to the point where readers see every Irish American soldier as a Fenian’ because that was certainly not the case across the whole diaspora in both the Union and Confederacy.<sup>18</sup> Yet, Fenians utilised print culture and propaganda. Thus their views appeared alongside other non-Fenian, Irish nationalist sympathetic voices, including in song, that were familiar to wider society. They also drew on and used a shared knowledge of Irish wartime service as part of their own arguments for independence and celebration of Irish heritage within an American setting.

This practice started before the outbreak of the war itself, in the initial years of the Fenian movement. Thomas Davis’s *The Green Above the Red* (c.1860), which created the lyrical image of the green flag of Erin above British emblem colours, was published and disseminated in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century. Its tune was re-appropriated for subsequent song compositions. This included another *Green Above the Red* ‘composed and sung by William H. Lindsay’ in 1860 and ‘dedicated to the St. Lawrence Order of the F.B.’, a Fenian Brotherhood chapter in St. Lawrence, State of New York, close to the Canadian border. The song celebrated joining ‘the Fenian cause’. Those who pledged their support to the

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*The Irish in America, 550-1972: A Chronology and Fact Book*, (New York: Oceana Publications, 1973), 86.

<sup>18</sup> Susannah J. Ural, “‘Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble’: Northern Irish American Catholics and the Union War Effort, 1861-1865, *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America’s Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Susannah J. Ural (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 127.



organisation ‘have nought to fear, with Bold O’Mahony to lead us’.<sup>19</sup> *What Irishmen Have Done* (c.1870), the post-Civil War Fenian sequel to *What Irish Boys Can Do*, returned to Davis-inspired rhetoric about the triumphant green flag of Erin when it prayed:

God grant the day may soon draw near, when the Fenian band,  
Will raise the green above the red, in their own native land.<sup>20</sup>

This same hope was repeated in *Our Own Flag of Green*, which was printed by numerous publishers in the United States and as a broadside ballad in Dublin around 1860. It told Ireland directly that the diaspora would return:

Soon shall our Green Flag wave o’er us,  
Soon, soon shall we march to meet the foe...  
The standard of England shall be torn,  
And no more in our Island shall be seen.

There was a problem with this Irish independence jubilation, however. Halfway through the ballad, the lyrics stopped focusing on just Irish soldiers returning to fight in Ireland, choosing to concentrate on the familiar idea of dual banner symbolism. ‘When the Eagle and our Shamrock are united’, Ireland and America together in the fight, then ‘the wrongs of our lands shall be righted’.<sup>21</sup> Despite the fact that only one lyric mentioned a metaphorical embodiment of the United States, the appearance of the eagle united and alongside the Irish casts doubt on the nature of the pro-Irish language in the rest of the song. Moreover, these Irish nationalist sentiments were set to a tune that also recalled banner duality. Again, the Irish turned to the American air of the *Red, White and Blue* to support their nationalist lyrics. Other ballads were even

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<sup>19</sup> *The Green Above the Red*, William H. Lindsay (New York: H. De Marsan, c.1860).

<sup>20</sup> *What Irishmen Have Done*, Eugene T. Johnston (New York: Charles Magnus, c.1866-1870).

<sup>21</sup> *Our Own Flag of Green* (New York: James Wrigley, c.1860).

more direct in this Irish independence dual fighting nation conflation. *The Fenian's Welcome to Ireland*, also written around 1860, sang of how both Fenians and Americans would be sailing across the Atlantic, ready to be welcomed in Ireland:

The Fenians are coming without more delay,  
The brave ships are ready to cross o'er the sea.  
The American fleet now will shortly appear,  
The Fenians will bid a happy new year.<sup>22</sup>

The American Civil War had lasting implications for the Fenian Brotherhood. As Malcolm Campbell has highlighted, while 'tentative plans for insurrection in Ireland were concocted...the outbreak of the Civil War in America thwarted plans for any immediate action'.<sup>23</sup> With the nation's primary concern focused on Confederate secession and the fight to keep the American Union together, a push to raise aid and active support for Fenian Irish independence was a secondary concern. Certainly, the number of Fenian members rose during the conflict, peaking between 1865 and 1866.<sup>24</sup> The organisation was not just present in the home-front. Lawrence J. McCaffrey has noted how 'Fenian recruiters were busy in both camps enlisting talent for the republican cause', while Marjorie R. Fallows has also observed how Fenians

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<sup>22</sup> *The Fenian's Welcome to Ireland* (c.1860), quoted by Georges-Denis Zimmermann, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs, 1780-1900* (Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1967), 31.

<sup>23</sup> Malcolm Campbell, *Ireland's New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 107.

<sup>24</sup> Exact Fenian Brotherhood numbers vary. Snay estimates the figure around 45,000, Mitchel Snay, *Fenians, Freedman, and Southern Whites: Race and Nationality in the Era of Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 56. Brundage argues the organisation claimed there were 50,000 members in 1865, David Brundage, *Irish Nationalist in America: The Politics of Exile, 1798-1998* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 103. If accurate, that represents around a quarter of Irish-born Union and Confederate soldiers. Kevin Kenny suggests the figure was as high as 250,000 members by 1865, 'many of them Civil War veterans', Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 128. Active Fenians were a minority in the Irish American diaspora, but sympathies for Irish nationalism were likely more widespread.

‘freely recruited their own military organisation from within’ both armies.<sup>25</sup> If anything, the Fenian Brotherhood was most active in the northern states, where it was primarily based. The Union Army’s Irish Brigade regiments, Corcoran’s Legion and the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment all had internal Fenian branches. This is reflected in the fact that Fenian American Civil War songs, such as those in this study, predominately originated in the Union instead of the Confederacy.

Initially, the American Civil War provided an opportunity for the Fenians that ultimately had a detrimental impact on the level of active support for the movement after 1865. *The Ottawa Free Trader* explained in its report of the 1863 Fenian Convention that the group’s leaders urged ‘the younger members of the Brotherhood to study military tactics’.<sup>26</sup> As has been suggested in numerous Fenian studies, the conflict ‘served as a training ground to prepare for war’ when the diaspora would lead the fight for independence against Britain.<sup>27</sup> Enlistment in the ‘Union and Confederate armies [was] a means of acquiring military expertise’ and an opportunity previous Irish nationalist uprising did not have to the same extent.<sup>28</sup> Yet, with enlistment and war service came great sacrifice. Meagher alluded to the problem Fenians and wider Irish nationalism faced in one of his Irish Brigade recruiting rally speeches:

It is a moral certainty that many of our countrymen who enlist in this struggle for the maintenance of the Union will fall in the contest. But, even so, I hold that one in ten of us come back when this war is over,

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<sup>25</sup> Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 121; Marjorie R. Fallows, *Irish American: Identity and Assimilation* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 54. David Sim has also highlighted how the Fenian’s sister organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, paid close attention to recruitment during the American Civil War, with their leader James Stephens travelling from Ireland to tour Union camps in spring 1864 to raise money and build nationalist networks, David Sim, *Union Forever: The Irish Question and U.S. Foreign Relations in the Victorian Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 87-88.

<sup>26</sup> *Ottawa Free Trader*, 28 November 1863.

<sup>27</sup> Susannah J. Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 55.

<sup>28</sup> McCaffrey, *Irish Diaspora in America*, 121.

the military experience gained by that *one* will be of more service in the fight for Ireland's freedom than...the entire ten.<sup>29</sup>

The Irish-born general was being overly optimistic in the face of stark reality. Fighting in wars runs a considerable risk of injury and death. Irish-born and descended soldiers on both sides fell, thinning the ranks, as Ural has argued, 'of potential freedom fighters' for Ireland to call upon.<sup>30</sup> John O'Mahony saw this problem as 'an impediment to Fenianism' at the first convention in Chicago, by which time the Irish Brigade was considerably reduced in fighting strength and Irish-dominant units were suffering severe casualties in both the Union and Confederacy.<sup>31</sup>

The wartime reality of Irish-born and descended fighters – the possible foot soldiers of the Fenian movement who would go back to Ireland to secure independence as ballads sung and hoped for – was also expressed in Irish American Civil War songs. *Lamentation on the American War* presented the aftermath of the Battle of Vicksburg in July 1864 as the dead lay on the battlefield. This included the fallen Irishmen in both the Union and Confederate forces, who were all:

Heaps of Irish heroes brave on the plains there lay,  
That was both killed and wounded there all in America.

The personal cost to the diaspora and families back in Ireland was articulated with great lyrical emotion. Describing how the news of the battle spread to Ireland, the broadside reported:

Many a mother anxiously to the Post Office ran,  
In hopes a welcome letter should return from her son,  
Alas but little do they know they fell in crimson gore,

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, quoted by Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 55.

<sup>30</sup> Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 190.

<sup>31</sup> Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 121-122.

Their bones lie mouldering with the dust all on Columbia's shore.<sup>32</sup>

By implication, the loss of experienced potential Irish fighters on American battlefields would impact the possibility of galvanising a force for independence once the war was over.

*Lamentation on the American War* was certainly one of the most vivid ballads in its blunt retelling of the impact of war on the loss of lives, but it also sang of another problematic reality Fenians had to contend. Ural has called this issue 'a larger tragedy for the Irish in America'. At Vicksburg, as at almost every encounter of the Civil War, Irish-born and descended soldiers faced each other on the battlefield. From the start at the First Battle of Bull Run, where the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia fought Louisianan regiments also comprised of Irishmen, to Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg and all other battles and skirmishes, soldiers from and connected to Ireland were fighting each other as members of Union and Confederate forces. While some may have 'entered the ranks with the same hopes of...gaining military experience that could be used to free Ireland from British rule', the conflict's reality soon revealed a truth that hampered Irish nationalist and Fenian hopes.<sup>33</sup> By fighting, killing and wounding each other, they were reducing those who could serve the cause of Irish independence at war's end.

This reality was reflected in a lyrical poem submitted by 'Bessie' to *The Irish-American* newspaper in July 1864. It lamented the diminished nature of the Union Army's Irish Brigade, commenting how 'Our Brigade exists no longer'. This referred to its reduction to a brigade in name only for a brief time over the summer of 1864 as its regimental numbers fell in the aftermath of two and a half years of costly service in

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<sup>32</sup> *Lamentation on the American War – Awful Battle at Vicksburg*, quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 459-460.

<sup>33</sup> Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 76.

Virginia. However, 'Bessie' went further. Portraying the reality of war and the impact the conflict was going to have on those who could have possibly mustered and fought for Irish independence, the poem's final stanza claimed how the Brigade's soldiers:

Had hoped to free from the tyrant's chain the dear old 'sainted Isle'.

And again behold its emerald sod, unprofaned by Saxon guile...

Their hopes, bright dreams, alas!

Themselves, with the mournful past, have fled...

Many a tear and tender thought will be given the lonely graves.<sup>34</sup>

The loss of Irish-born and descended soldiers was presented as a tragedy for the diaspora and Ireland. Those harbouring independence plans on both sides of the Atlantic would shed the tears 'given for the lonely graves' in the poem. The only way to counter the loss was to return to notions of an Irish and American unified alliance.

As previous examples have demonstrated, uniting the banners of Erin and America was a common trope in Civil War ballads. Furthermore, this lyrical rhetoric of dual emblem imagery also influenced how those sympathetic to Irish nationalist independence desires, including Fenians, articulated their plans about returning to Ireland to fight Britain. Frequently those retuning were not alone. Americans, songs implied, would be involved in this future conflict. Nationalists in the diaspora realised that due to a lack of substantial funds and, especially during the Civil War, a lack of available men, help was needed from elsewhere. As David Sim has argued, they 'saw allying their cause with American power as necessary if they were to achieve their ends'.<sup>35</sup> This was apparent to Meagher early in the conflict when he observed how the Irish 'could not hope to succeed in our effort to make Ireland a Republic without the moral and material aid of the liberty-loving citizens of these United States'.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, 'Bessie', *The Irish-American* (New York), 30 July 1864.

<sup>35</sup> David Sim, *Union Forever*, 7.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, quoted by Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 52.

Wartime ballads likewise expressed this view, singing of the fighting benefits of united Irish and American soldiers. Directed initially at the Confederates, *The Irish Volunteer* painted a battlefield image of how the two nations would be a formidable foe. These lyrics could extend for nationalists to describe going to fight the British:

May traitors quake, and rebels shake, and tremble in their fears,  
When next they meet the Yankee boys and Irish volunteers!<sup>37</sup>

The same sentiment could be heard in the postbellum Fenian ballad *Fenians Ever More* (1866), which noted how ‘Poor Johnny Bull will quickly find what united hearts can do’, combining Americans into the ‘what Irish boys can do’ ethos’.<sup>38</sup> *Paddy the Loyal* went even further to taunt the British with the thought of Irish and American soldiers combining to fight against them in 1863. Recalling anti-British sentiment, the ballad sang of a sense that the Irish were owed justice and freedom. Its lyrics also mocked the British by recalling the last battle for independence one of their dominions attempted, referring to the American War of Independence and the revolutionary successes of American soldiers:

Well Erin’s sons know old John Bull,  
And long to pay him off in full;  
Faith Uncle Sam’s his match you know!  
Bull found that out some time ago.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, whilst singing about this dual Irish and American fighting force crossing the Atlantic to Ireland emphasised a spirit of transnational unity in the name of democratic republicanism, it betrayed an underlying problem with the

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<sup>37</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*.

<sup>38</sup> *Fenians Ever More* (Boston: George D. Russell & Company, 1866).

<sup>39</sup> *Paddy the Loyal*, ‘By Himself’, in *The Continental Songster: A Collection of New, Spirited, Patriotic Songs, For the Times* (Philadelphia: A. Winch, 1863), 36-38.

‘distinctive diaspora nationalism’ forged by Fenians.<sup>40</sup> The fact that the Fenians needed American support raises a question about precisely *who* would be leading the fight for independence in Ireland if such plans came to fruition. Singing about Irish and American soldiers together carrying out this task pointed to the reality that despite sympathy for nationalist causes, active support and volunteers from within the diaspora – compounded by the loss of experienced soldiers during the war – were not enough alone to bring any near-future bid for independence to fruition. The Fenians themselves recognised this, as one letter from the Fenian Society in Chicago to Secretary of State William Seward revealed several months after the end of the war. They appealed to Seward and the restored United States ‘for your aid, we want money...we have the men, we want the means’. Yet, elsewhere in the letter and in similar language to Meagher’s earlier statement, they had acknowledged the ‘need [for] the sympathy and material aid of the American men’. While promising that ‘this is the last time that Ireland as a mendicant shall pass the beggars box’, such an appeal, even when the organisation was at its peak size, highlights the level of strength it could muster realistically for an immediate ‘day of Ireland’s trial’.<sup>41</sup>

Around the same time the Fenian Society in Chicago appealed to Seward, one end-of-the-war ballad revealed the same desires for American money and men to support the Irish cause. *The Irish-American Army*, printed in the Fenian-specific song-book *Stephens’ Fenian Songster* in 1866, suggested:

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<sup>40</sup> Snay, *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites*, 140.

<sup>41</sup> The Fenian Society (Chicago) to William H. Seward, 21 September 1865, The Papers of William H. Seward, VHL.



When comes the hour to fight the Power  
 That tramples Irish freedom,  
 Columbia, then, will give us men,  
 A Grant, too, if we need him?<sup>42</sup>

The final line was a pun – America would provide a monetary grant to the Fenian cause and, more specifically, an American general to gather soldiers together to fight against the British. ‘A Grant’ was General Ulysses S. Grant, the Union Army’s commander. This lyrical suggestion that Grant could be enlisted to help the Irish and that America would, as the song sang bluntly, ‘give’ the men to fill nationalist ranks, presents an overt sense of surety in their cause. It again stresses that the Irish could not battle alone. The 1866 *Fenians Ever More* likewise gave the lyrical impression that America would come to Ireland’s aid: ‘with Yankee ships and Irish hearts’, the two countries’ soldiers would ‘cross the mighty Main’. The song thus explained that America’s ‘starry flag shall then protect the Fenians ever more’.<sup>43</sup>

In the view of wartime ballads, the United States would support Fenian and Irish nationalist causes because it owed a debt of service to Ireland for the military aid Irish-born and descended soldiers had given on the battlefield. Kate C.M.’s *The Irish Brigade* (1862) told Irish soldiers:

Hope on, then, soldiers, the day yet you’ll see,  
 When true love of freedom shall set Ireland free;  
 And believe that the country for which Haggerty died,  
 In peace or in war, will stand by your side.<sup>44</sup>

This was a reference to the County Donegal native Captain James Haggerty of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia, the first Union Army Irish officer to die in the Civil War

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<sup>42</sup> *The Irish-American Army*, ‘By Corporal Barney’, in *Stephen’s Fenian Songster* (c.1866), quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 439-440.

<sup>43</sup> *Fenians Ever More*.

<sup>44</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M., in *Continental Songster*, 58-59.

at the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861. Even in 1863, when *The Irish Brigade* was published, Haggerty's spirit was being recalled to stress that if he had given his life for the American Union, then America should return the same fighting favour to aid Ireland's independence. The Fenian Society expressed the same point to Seward in 1865, reminding him of Irish-born and descended soldiers' sacrifice. 'Hundreds of brave men whose lives went out side-by-side with your countrymen', they argued, all fought believing that 'America would not forget the many brave Irish hearts who marched to death beneath the starry banner'.<sup>45</sup>

No Irish American Civil War verse articulated this sentiment better than the final stanza of *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade*. Reminding America of Irish war service, it stated that Columbia would aid Erin if the latter struck for independence:

Then, surely Columbia can never forget,  
While valor and fame hold communion,  
How nobly the brave Irish Volunteers fought,  
In defense of the Flag of our Union –  
And, if ever Old Ireland for Freedom should strike,  
We'll a helping hand offer quite freely.  
And the Stars and the Stripes shall be seen alongside,  
Of the flag of the Land of Shillaly.<sup>46</sup>

However, like the title of the Fenian ballad *The Irish-American Army* and the lyrical examples of America answering Ireland's call, *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* again confused the issue of *who* would offer 'a helping hand' to Ireland. The first part of the verse was directed initially at America itself, asking the country not to forget the diaspora's contribution to the Civil War. The second half, however, returned to the collective pronoun fusion of 'our' and 'we' that revealed the combination of Irish

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<sup>45</sup> Fenian Society to Seward, 21 September 1865.

<sup>46</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade*.

and American identity together. The song sang of the Irish experience of the war, of service in the Irish Brigade and the sacrifice of the eponymous Pat Murphy who stood for all Irish-born and descended soldiers. Yet, here was an Irish voice singing about ‘our Union’, meaning America, and the collective ‘we’ of the Irish *as* Americans.<sup>47</sup>

What *Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade* revealed was how Irish nationalist sentiment in the diaspora, and Fenian sentiment too, were instilled with the same sense of American association and identity seen elsewhere in Civil War ballads. Irish American Civil War songs and Fenian American Civil War songs contain lyrical sentiments that support Samito’s suggestion that ‘Irish nationalism in America evolved during the Civil War into a context of loyalty to the United States’ and that ‘the Fenian movement [revealed] a surprising level of Americanisation within Irish America’.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, as shown elsewhere in this study, Irish-born and descended soldiers’ sense of their own relationship to America and American identity, alongside that held by the Irish diaspora in the home-front, was strongly supportive of Union and Confederate causes in wartime song expressions. While nationalist sentiments and retention of Irish cultural heritage remained for first and second-generation migrants, years of living in the United States and the enhanced patriotism of war infused a sense of Americanness. Samito’s argument is wrong to suggest the Americanisation of Irish nationalism ‘evolved’ during the conflict. This process began far earlier; the Civil War added a new dimension to this process. Wartime songs gave it voice.

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<sup>47</sup> Pat Murphy returned from his lyrical death in the postbellum ballad *The Finnegins*. An anti-British song supportive of the ‘Finnegins’ cause (dialect for ‘Fenians’), it sang of how ‘Pat Murphy, he stood on the shore...waiting to hear the Lion’ after he captured a British flag in Eastport, Maine. This was reference to Fenian Canada raids in 1866, *The Finnegins, Or Down to Eastport Town*, Frank Wilder (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1866).

<sup>48</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 102.

Fenian articulations of this American construction of Irish nationalism reveal the problem dual identity loyalty and association ultimately had for their independence cause. Alongside seeking American manpower, material and money, Fenians also turned to American music to bolster their Irish nationalist lyrical articulations. As mentioned, the air of *Red, White and Blue* – or *Columbia, Gem of the Ocean* as it was also known – was a popular American tune adopted by the Irish during the conflict. Fenians also adapted wartime ballads produced about the Irish fighting in the war itself. The best example of this was the adoption of a ballad written in honour of Chicago Irish regiments mobilised under Colonel James A. Mulligan in 1861. Set again to *Red, White and Blue*, the *Camp Song of the Irish Brigade* (1861) sang of Irish devotion to the Union cause. Calling on the traditional figure of Granuaile once more, it described how:

Old ‘Grann’ now looks over the ocean,  
And hears the fierce bugle of Mars,  
And the strength of her hearts high devotion,  
Is rou’d for the Stripes and the Stars.<sup>49</sup>

The following year in 1862, James Wrigley published *The Fenian Brigade*. This was effectively an altered Fenian version of *Camp Song of the Irish Brigade*, set to the same American tune and for the most part lyrically unchanged. Instead of singing about the fighting spirit of the Chicago ‘Irish Brigade’, this new version added a chorus refrain about how ‘the English will fly in terror before you, when charged by the Fenian Brigade’. The most obvious alteration came in the verse relating to Granuaile’s own view of the American Civil War:

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<sup>49</sup> *Camp Song of the (Chicago) Irish Brigade*, P.T. Hade (Chicago: Root & Cady, 1861).

Old Granna has looked o'er the ocean,  
 And heard the fierce bugle of Mars;  
 And the strength of her heart's high devotion  
 Was roused for the stripes and the stars;  
 Now she raises her voice loud as thunder...  
 Saying: 'Boys, cut the English, asunder,  
 With the swords of your Fenian Brigade!'<sup>50</sup>

Here Granuaile was used to represent both the American and the Irish identity duality that Fenians had to combine simultaneously. However, given the more overt American rhetoric of the original version, and its American tune, devotion to the Union dominated over Fenian expressions.

Another song 'sung around the Camp Fir[es] of the Irish Brigade' was included at the end of the Fenian Society's letter to Seward in 1865. To underline their argument that the United States should help the Fenians, the correspondents included quotes from the 1863 ballad *Comrades of the Cannon*. Described as the 'song of the Cannon', it was a general wartime camp-fire ballad. It sang about 'comrades around our Camp Fire bright' who represented the transnational composition of the Union forces. 'Freedom's Fight is all the same', lyrics explained, whether soldiers were bivouacking 'by Hudson Rhine or Shannon', referring to New York, German and Irish American soldiers respectively. The song also included a rallying American cry: 'Here's to our Starry Banner'.<sup>51</sup> By implication, German and Irish soldiers joined in this iteration. Thus in this example, the Fenians used a song that still articulated American sentiments first and foremost.

Furthermore, the most important Irish song written after the Civil War, *God Save Ireland*, was itself set to an American tune. T.D. Sullivan's proto-Irish

<sup>50</sup> *The Fenian Brigade* (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>51</sup> *Comrades of the Cannon* (c.1863), quoted by the Fenian Society to Seward, 21 September 1865.

nationalist anthem, written in 1867, spread throughout Ireland and the Irish diaspora. One of the fundamental reasons for its quick adoption in the United States was because Sullivan used the music of the American Civil War song *Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!* for his composition.<sup>52</sup> The famous wartime songwriter and music publisher George F. Root had written the original lyrics and music in 1863. It was fundamentally an American cultural output with no Irish connections. It also inspired numerous sequel versions such as *On! On! On! The Boys Came Marching* (1865) and other parodies during the war.<sup>53</sup> It quickly became a tune used for different songs in its own right, including *Grant to Washington Shall Go* at the time of Ulysses S. Grant's presidential election campaign in 1869.<sup>54</sup> Sullivan's use of it for his own song is not surprising given the practice of setting words to familiar tunes to aid their success. In many ways, Root's *Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!* followed the reverse dissemination journey of *The Irish Jaunting Car* and Harry Macarthy's *The Bonnie Blue Flag*. Instead this was an American-produced song and tune that travelled across the Atlantic to Ireland in the nineteenth century and 'became Irish'. It also, ironically for the Fenian Irish nationalists, became a Canadian tune in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was used for ballads written in response to the first Fenian invasion attempt in May 1866, as 'Canadian volunteers...celebrated their victory over the Fenians by singing'. This included one song that explained:

When the news spread through the land that the Fenians were at hand,  
At our country's call we'll cheerfully obey...

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<sup>52</sup> *Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The Prisoner's Hope* (Chicago: Root & Cady, 1863).

<sup>53</sup> *On! On! On! The Boys Came Marching, Or, The Prisoner Free – Sequel to Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1865).

<sup>54</sup> *Grant to Washington Shall Go* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1869).

For beneath the Union Jack we will drive the Fenians back,  
And we'll fight for our beloved Canadian home.<sup>55</sup>

Therefore here was an example of an anti-Fenian Canadian song, set to an American tune, directed at the Irish diaspora in America in 1866, who in turn the following year would take up the same American tune while singing a song that extolled Irish nationalism. The myriad of identities Sullivan's *God Save Ireland* carried with it sings of the fluid nature of transnational musical culture.

### **6.3 Who Would Fight for Ireland? Independence and Fenian Lyrical Doubts**

The need for supportive aid to help any credible attempt at a fight for Irish independence in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War raises questions about how solid a construct and practice Fenian nationalism specifically, and Irish nationalism more broadly, was in the 1860s. Historiography has tended to focus on the divisions within the organisation in 1866, when factional arguments generated by 'botched...incursions' and 'misadventures' into Canada, fragmented the Fenian Brotherhood.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, 'transnational factionalism' between the Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and postbellum Anglo-American diplomatic relationships, added to tensions that were already appearing during the Civil War. The failed invasion in Britain in 1867, led by Confederate Colonel Thomas Kelly, 'triggered a major political split within the ranks' of American Fenians resulting in the effective end of the organisation by the 1870s.<sup>57</sup> The 'singular harmony of feeling and unanimity of purpose' found at the 1863 Chicago convention, and the hope of rising membership numbers and two further conventions in Cincinnati and

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<sup>55</sup> Edith Fowke, "Canadian Variations of a Civil War Song", *Midwest Folklore*, 13:2 (1963), 102. Fowke's study of the Canadian legacy of *Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!* reveals that Root's American tune achieved 'continued popularity...in Canada'. It was also used for Canadian Boar War and First World War ballads.

<sup>56</sup> Campbell, *Ireland's New Worlds*, 109-110.

<sup>57</sup> Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 103-105.

Philadelphia in 1865, diminished for this particular branch of Irish nationalist activity.<sup>58</sup>

As Gillian O'Brien had argued, 'the movement [was] never entirely united' even before its 1866-1867 split.<sup>59</sup> There is need for further study on this subject, particularly in relation to how the American Fenians' fracture relates to understandings of the Irish during the Civil War and their respective relationship to 'being Irish' and 'being American' as has often been assessed. James H. Adams suggested in his study on 'negotiated' Hibernianism that the undeveloped 'inchoate nature' of nationalist organisations needs attention in Irish American transnational studies. He notes that by the time of the Fenian Brotherhood's decline, they 'had only been active for ten years, four of which were spent fighting...in the American Civil War'.<sup>60</sup> Irish American Civil War songs and Fenian ballads from the era that articulated Irish nationalist ideas and desires alongside dual loyalty, identity and dependency on the United States, provide one under-researched area. Future exploration of these tensions, support and articulation of strength in the Irish American nationalist diaspora is needed.

Undoubtedly, it must be stressed that Fenian, Irish nationalist and Irish cultural heritage specific ballads and lyrics were in the minority of songs and music outputs during the Civil War years. Few songs were dedicated to specific chapters and Fenian activities were rarely referred to or mentioned. One reason was that these songs were being disseminated to the wider American public. While they sang with sympathetic tones that showed a level of nationalist hope for independence one day,

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<sup>58</sup> *Ottawa Free Trader*, 28 November 1863.

<sup>59</sup> Gillian O'Brien, *Blood Runs Green: The Murder That Transfixed Gilded Age Chicago* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), 22.

<sup>60</sup> James H. Adams, "The Negotiated Hibernian: Discourse on the Fenian in England and America", *American Nineteenth Century History*, 11:1 (2010), 47; 53.



America was emphasised over Ireland as the foremost country of focus. Any actual specific Fenian activity was not heard in ballads, unless they were tied to aspirations about American support for independence. The same relative silence appears in the letters and memoirs of those most frequently sung about in Irish American Civil War songs. Michael Corcoran is occasionally described in studies as being a central Fenian member in New York before and during the conflict, although there is no direct evidence from him that he was involved actively. Despite describing how Ireland was ‘still beneath the iron heel of a despotic power’ in his prisoner-of-war memoir, surviving Corcoran records are mute in even hinting about Irish independence visions. That being said, John O’Mahony visited Corcoran’s camp in 1863 and Fenians served under the Irish-born general in his Legion and 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia.<sup>61</sup>

By comparison, Thomas Francis Meagher used the Fenian movement when it served his military and political purposes, but his overall level of support, like Corcoran’s, is similarly questionable. Ever since the Young Irelander arrived in the United States in 1852, his public relationship to Irish nationalism in the diaspora vacillated. In March 1861, *The Irish-American* reported the ‘unusual absence of...T.F. Meagher, and others of the Irish nationalist party’ at the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick’s dinner in honour of Ireland’s patron saint.<sup>62</sup> This may well be because, as Kenneth Moss has highlighted, ‘in the mid-nineteenth century, the Society of Friendly

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<sup>61</sup> Michael Corcoran, *The Captivity of General Corcoran: The Only Authentic and Reliable Narrative of the Trials and Sufferings Endured, During his Twelve Months’ Imprisonment in Richmond and Other Southern Cities, by Brigadier-General Michael Corcoran, the Hero of Bull Run* (Philadelphia: Barclay & Co, 1864), 22. In one letter Corcoran reported he was ‘expecting a visit from [Meagher] and O’Mahony’, Corcoran to Daly, 11 September 1863. The plaque outside the William P. Gunnell House where Corcoran died in December 1863 states he ‘commanded the Fenian Brotherhood of N.Y.’ (Fairfax, Virginia). However, Corcoran did not engaged publically with the organisation during his war career.

<sup>62</sup> *Irish-American*, 18 March 1861.

Sons was not particularly nationalist'.<sup>63</sup> Meagher did have connections to the Fenian Brotherhood though, but so did many prominent Irish Americans in New York City where the group were strongest during the Civil War. On 22 January 1864, the group organised a second 'performance' of Meagher's funeral elegy for Michael Corcoran at the Cooper Institute, and like Corcoran, he met with O'Mahony in Irish Brigade camps.<sup>64</sup> However, after the war, Meagher appears to have shunned the Fenians altogether. Not long after he took up his position as Montana's Acting Governor, 'industrious and enterprising Irishmen – members of the Fenian Brotherhood' visited him. Meagher wrote to William Seward to inform him about this meeting because

As an officer of the United States, I felt bound in honour, as well as by a conscientious regard to my official obligations, not to say or do anything which might be at variance with the policy and duty of the Government.

Despite his 'feeling and convictions', which 'made it impossible for me not sympathize with an organization which has the liberation of Ireland at heart', publicly Meagher refused to interact with local Fenian chapters.

These Fenian members had gone to meet Meagher to inform him of their intention in 'this city, and the neighboring mining districts, to give...a serenade in honour' of his arrival in the region. This was a reference to a common political culture practice in nineteenth century America where groups would sing songs and compositions to political figures in public, serenading them with praise and support.

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<sup>63</sup> Kenneth Moss, "St. Patrick's Day Celebrations and the Foundation of Irish-American Identity, 1845-1875", *Journal of Social History*, 29:1 (1995), 134.

<sup>64</sup> 'Funeral Oration of the late Brigadier General Corcoran, to be delivered by Brigadier General Meagher' Invitation from John O'Mahony to Charles P. Daly, 16 January 1864, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL. As the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick president and a member of the New York Irish American elite, Daly received invitations to Fenian Brotherhood events. Maria Lydig Daly's diary also attests that her husband was an acquaintance of O'Mahony's. The Fenian leader often visited but Maria, despite commenting on Irish political views, never mentioned the Fenian organisation by name.

Meagher told Seward that the ‘Serenade took place’ and that ‘several hundreds of citizens in no way connected with the Fenian Brotherhood attended’, although members of the organisation were also there.<sup>65</sup> Given Fenian interests in British military sites in Canada and Montana’s close boundary with its northern neighbours, Meagher was alluding to the fact the United States government would have to deal with potential Anglo-Canadian-American diplomacy issues relating to the Fenians, something that was to come to fruition the following year with the attempt raids across and along the border.<sup>66</sup> In an act of Republican government loyalty, Meagher was making sure Seward knew that he would not ‘speak in relation to the Brotherhood’ or deal with them in secret. He sent his account in case he was ever ‘officially called in [to] question’ about his postbellum Irish nationalist stance, which appears here, amid the currying favour, as being no longer publicly active.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, despite what some Irish American wartime ballads wished for in their lyrics about Meagher and Corcoran leading their Irish-born and descended soldiers back to Ireland to fight for independence, such a reality was impossible. Corcoran died in December 1863 and Meagher, prior to his death in 1867, showed no sign of active support for the Fenian cause after the war. It is also worth considering whether, had the circumstances differed, the two most prominent Irish American Civil

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher to William H. Seward, 10 October 1865, The Papers of William H. Seward, VHL.

<sup>66</sup> Meagher’s display of American loyalty in relation to Fenian politics hinted at a sentiment heard after the 1866 Fenian Canada raids when the Republican administration began to question the place of Irish nationalism in wider society. This showed the division and difference between the diaspora’s Fenian support and sympathy. For example, Irish-born Colonel Patrick Guiney saw himself as an American citizen, an identity reinforced by the war. Yet like Meagher, he understood Irish nationalist sympathies, stating he was ‘no Fenian, properly so called; but I think well of those who are, and better of their cause’, Patrick Guiney to Benjamin F. Butler, 25 November 1867, quoted by Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 202.

<sup>67</sup> Meagher to Seward, 10 October 1865. The Fenians who visited Meagher were likely from the John Mitchel Circle of Montana Territory, which had approximately 150 members, Snay, *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites*, 56.

War generals would have returned to Ireland. Neither appeared to show enormous public enthusiasm for Fenian activities and evidence suggests their level of support, while sympathetic, was not much more than that during the war itself. Like the wartime ballads about them, Meagher and Corcoran put their loyalty to America above their old home nation.

The dawn of a new era for the diaspora after the American Civil War brought with it a cemented sense of American nationality. When a ‘Mr. Mullaly’ wrote *Long Live the Sixty-Ninth* at the end of the war, he returned to a familiar Irish American lyrical trope. Notwithstanding calling upon Irish cultural heritage, symbols and language, all of these had become American too. In a similar way to *Cead Mille Fealthe* welcoming home the 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, *Long Live the Sixty-Ninth* sang in celebration of the returning Irish-born and descended soldiers of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York in 1861, with their home city singing in dual Irish and American jubilation:

Hail to the men now in triumph returning...  
 Ireland is proud, and America is grateful,  
 The heart of each Irish girl bounds at their names.  
 ‘Caed millea failtha, men!’  
 Out on the air again –  
 Rings the clear sound of the Irish hurrah...  
 Long live the Sixty-ninth! Erin go Bragh! ...  
 The honour of Ireland was safe in their keeping,  
 The ‘Sunburst’ and ‘Stars and Stripes’ safe in their hands  
 No marvel they fought with a strength superhuman,  
 For each man in the Sixty-ninth struck for TWO lands.<sup>68</sup>

The ‘two lands’ had two meanings – America and Ireland as well as America and the Irish American nation that the diaspora had constructed and brought to the fore during

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<sup>68</sup> *Long Live the Sixty-Ninth*, ‘Words by Mr. Mullaly’ (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

the Civil War. Irish America was its own entity, a mixture of American patriotism with an Irish cultural heritage where vestiges of the language and emblems were alongside those belonging to the United States.

Not even the most prolific Irish songwriter could fully escape the pull of the United States when writing about Irish nationalism after the American Civil War. In 1865, Charles Graham Halpine published *Baked Meats of the Funeral*, ‘a collection of essays, poems, speeches, histories and banquets’ that continued the adventures of his fictional Irish soldier Private Miles O’Reilly.<sup>69</sup> The book also contained more of Halpine’s own commentary on the state of Irish nationalism at the end of the conflict. *Baked Meats*, like his earlier works, was disseminated widely and showed society that the Irish were loyal to the American Union. At the outbreak of the war, Halpine had produced *Old Ireland*, a poem which promised how Ireland’s ‘sons now abroad, arming themselves, would soon come to her rescue’.<sup>70</sup> He repeated this notion in *The Fenian Rallying Song*, printed within an essay on the Fenian Brotherhood in *Baked Meats*. Most of the song sang of a hope that the day would soon be granted when ‘we may press our native sod’ and end ‘Ireland’s long eclipse’. Again though, Fenian independence soldiers were not returning alone. One line stated: ‘let them give us arms and ships’ – a hope for American military aid. The penultimate verse likewise included lyrics about how American forces would also be involved ‘when the Stars and Stripes may burn...against our foes’ and ‘when Yankee guns shall thunder on Britain’s coast’.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Charles Graham Halpine, *Baked Meats of the Funeral: A Collection of Essays, Poems, Speeches, Histories and Banquets, by Private Miles O’Reilly, Late of the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry, 10<sup>th</sup> Army Corps* (New York: Carleton, 1866).

<sup>70</sup> Charles Graham Halpine, *Old Ireland* (1861), quoted by William Hanchett, *Irish: Charles Graham Halpine in Civil War America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970), 153.

<sup>71</sup> *The Fenian Rallying Song*, Charles Graham Halpine, in *Baked Meats of the Funeral*, 236-237.

Halpine, like Corcoran and Meagher, indicated signs of a less-than strong overall level of Fenian support. He was undoubtedly connected to the organisation, addressing them at one meeting in Jersey City in May 1865, and he also wrote editorials in the *New York Herald* about Irish nationalism and the Fenians specifically.<sup>72</sup> Yet, in his extensive biography on the Irish songwriter, William Hanchett has highlighted that Halpine ‘never states publicly that he himself was a member of the Fenian Brotherhood’. He thought that the Canadian raids were ‘criminal and irresponsible’ and ‘denounced [them] as folly and a crime’.<sup>73</sup> While sympathetic to independence, Halpine described Fenianism as a ‘curious and erratic movement’.<sup>74</sup> It was a fitting depiction for the entire state of Irish nationalism in the diaspora during the American Civil War.

It is also one that suits the nature of song lyrics that discussed Irish nationalism, cultural nationalism, Irish heritage and Fenianism. If Halpine, the public singing voice of Irish America Civil War sentiment on the home-front, articulated sympathetic cultural nationalism over supportive Fenian nationalism, and American loyalty over Irish identity, then again questions must be raised about the diaspora’s retention of Irishness across the whole of the country during the conflict. Wartime lyrics about Ireland’s independence sang of a dream that another generation was to carry to fruition. If anything, the Irish in the America Civil War sang of Ireland in symbolic form. Their lyrical politics in the 1860s was one focused on more American concerns borne from the conflict between the Union and Confederacy.

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<sup>72</sup> ‘Miles and the Fenians’ – ‘Private Miles O’Riley in Jersey City - Major Chas. G. Halpine (‘Private Miles O’Riley’) is announced to speak before the Fenians, at Washington Hall, Jersey City, on Sunday evening’, *The New York Times* (New York), 28 May 1865.

<sup>73</sup> Hanchett, *Irish*, 153-155.

<sup>74</sup> Halpine, *Baked Meats of the Funeral*, ii.



## Chapter 7

### **‘If Ye’s Won’t Fight, Don’t Talk Disloyal’**

#### **Irish Lyrical Expressions of American Wartime Politics**

Within its commentary on the state of local New York politics and Democrat Party wartime machinations, Charles Graham Halpine’s *Song of the National Democracy* contained two lyrical lines that encapsulated the sentiments of Irish American Civil War songs and the main vein of historiographical argument about Irish American attitudes during the conflict. Combining both articulations of Irish loyalty to the Stars and Stripes and the Union American cause with criticism of Confederate secessionists, and racist reference to African Americans and the fact that the conflict would lead to slave emancipation, Halpine’s 1864 lyrics put fighting in the war and seeing its continuation through towards a Union victory first and foremost:

To the flag we are pledged – all its foes we abhor;  
And we ain’t for the nigger, but are for the war!<sup>1</sup>

Expressions of pledging support to the Star Spangled Banner and the Union cause echoed those heard in ballads about the Irish experience in the 1860s. However, while dominant in lyrical form, it is a sentiment that has been relatively neglected in favour of establishing a narrative about Irish wartime disillusionment, despondency and dislike of war aims related to freeing slaves.

This chapter will analyse lyrical sentiments relating to nativist responses, attitudes and racial views about African Americans, slavery and emancipation, and over-arching political arguments, especially in relation to secession, the Democratic Party and the 1864 presidential election. It will observe how the actions and singing

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<sup>1</sup> *Song of the National Democracy*, Charles Graham Halpine in *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services and Speeches of Private Miles O’Reilly [Pseud.], 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New York Volunteers, with Comic Illustrations by Mullen, from the Authentic Records of the ‘New York Herald’* (New York: Carleton, 1864), 69-71.



sentiments of Irish-born and descended soldiers impacted home-front opinions voiced in wartime songs, and how war service was used to shape home-front attitudes in specific relation to anti-Irish nativism, the role of African Americans in the military, and in relation to the war politics of 1864. In particular, it will focus on the key influence of the Irish-born songwriter Charles Graham Halpine, whose pointed lyrical commentary did much to influence both Irish and wider American Union attitudes about these subjects. His songs impacted lyrical articulation about all aspects of the conflict and demonstrate why these sentiments should not be left unheard in studies of the Irish American Civil War experience.

Halpine's lyrical commentary played to both perceived and real Irish racism towards African Americans, hostility to the Emancipation Proclamation, years of bitter resentment about anti-Catholic Irish nativist attacks originating in the decade before the Civil War, wartime military enlistment and bounty policies culminated in four of the darkest days of Irish American history: the New York City Draft Riots in July 1863. The Riots, which took place from 13 July to 16 July 1863, created further dissonance and tensions between Irish views on the war, draft and emancipation policies. Over the course of four violent days, many of the New York City's disparate diaspora members (though by no means all) rioted and attacked institutions associated with conscription policies and emancipation, including abolitionist presses and the Colored Orphans Asylum. By the end of the rioting, over 100 people had died, over 2000 were injured, including many victims from the city's African American population. The Irish community was blamed heavily for events.

Certainly, the experience of New York in 1863, where these tensions were put into starkest relief and came to the most violent boiling point in the country's history, was not the norm. What is undeniable, however, is that the Civil War provided a

platform for such tensions to fester and form in public discourse as the Irish, themselves recent subjects of racist nativist attacks, turned into the persecutors of the people they were also fighting, in the Union at least, ultimately to set free. Each suburb, city, state and region, and each Irish military unit and home-front community during the war, had their own varying degrees of racial hostility towards African Americans. Part of their racism was a sign of Irish assimilation and adoption of American attitudes, alongside the fact recent poor, working-class, urban Irish migrants were concerned emancipated slaves would journey north and cause economic and employment tensions as both groups competed for work. In many ways the Irish migrants' relationship to African Americans in urban enclaves, especially in eastern seaboard cities such as New York were large population figures and constant influxes of workers created the most employment and economic pressures, played to notions of racial hierarchies amongst migrant groups. As nativist anti-immigrant attacks abated during the war years and the diaspora, especially Catholic Irish members, were accepted into American working class society, attention turned to attacking those beneath them on the social ladder of acceptance – namely free blacks, slaves and those aligned with bringing about emancipation in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

As ever with Irish American historiography, the New York Irish example and its homogenising impact on much Irish American Civil War studies has led to an unbalanced assessment. The participation of some of the city's Irish population in the Draft Riot's worst violence, especially towards African Americans and institutions supportive of abolition and emancipation, has created a persistent negative narrative that stresses a lack of Irish support for the American Civil War. In Susannah Ural's

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<sup>2</sup> For greater assessment of the wider social and political tensions and impacts the New York City Draft Riots had particularly on Civil War era racial and migrant views, see Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

view, its events were undeniably ‘harmful for the Irish’. She suggests ‘the riots...renewed or reinforced nearly every negative stereotype about the Irish in America’ and, arguably, in subsequent historiography.<sup>3</sup> Despite extensive conflicting primary evidence which reveals internal divisions and contrary opinions about the actions of Irish rioters from fellow members of the diaspora, pervading scholarship has suggested home-front views and actions – particularly in New York – applied to the whole Irish community in America and to the soldiers fighting in Irish and non-Irish dominated Union Army units.

This historiographical narrative runs counter to Irish American Civil War song sentiments. The culminating issues of the Draft Riots – nativism, racism, enlistment, political sympathies, and views about the war’s aims, policies, generals and government leaders – are relatively mute in Irish American wartime ballads. The Draft Riots themselves appear in a handful of veiled passing lyrical references. Riots and religion, two of the most common topics of Irish American nineteenth century studies, are removed from the contemporary lyrical lexicon. Their omission says as much, perhaps even more, than their inclusion. One reason may well be basic commercial interest related to the widespread dissemination of songs into society and a desire to leave out more unpalatable topics. That would certainly explain the lack of religious references in songs, so as not to draw attention to soldiers’ Catholicism in a climate of nativist suspicion. Moreover, anti-Irish nativist responses were important sentiments heard in Irish wartime songs, most notably in *No Irish Need Apply* ballads that attacked the hostility about the place of the Irish in American society.

On the other hand, the lack of reference to the other contributing Draft Riots factor, and the one discussed most often in Irish American Civil War studies – racism

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<sup>3</sup> Susannah J. Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 188; 182.

and Irish attitudes towards slavery, emancipation and African Americans – cannot be explained by simple omission of controversial issues. The continual popularity of minstrel show tunes and songs, the frequent use of racist rhetoric in general Union and Confederate ballads, and even the depiction of caricatured slaves on song sheet border illustrations, all point towards the reality of everyday inherent American racism immovable from public discourse. This attitude made extremely infrequent lyrical appearance in wartime ballads. That is not to say that because they did not sing about racist prejudices that the Irish in America were not racist.<sup>4</sup> Their singing focus, however, was centred on other topics, namely loyalty to the Union and Confederacy, American identity articulation, Irish cultural nationalism and the fighting experiences of soldiers.

When a handful of lyrics on the subject did appear, they were placed in broader commentary related to wider American political issues. On the home-front, where attitudes received more exaggerated bias through speeches, anti-Irish commentary and newspapers editorials, it was certainly possible to hear Irish criticism of the war, the draft and fears about emancipation. The latter mostly centred on the belief that ‘the immediate abolition of slavery would place’ the Irish ‘in direct economic competition in the labour market’.<sup>5</sup> Such fears generated racist charges against African Americans and were expounded where the largest number of Irish resided, particularly in New York City.

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<sup>4</sup> In his study of 1870s New York Irish political violence, Michael A. Gordon makes few Draft Riot comparisons, yet he highlights that although the Irish in New York City (and by extension many other northern cities and states) were ‘often racist and usually loyal Democrats, thousands eagerly joined’ Union Army Irish regiments and supported the Union cause, Michael A. Gordon, *The Orange Riots: Irish Political Violence in New York City, 1870 and 1871* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, “Irish Americans and American Nationality, 1848-66”, in *Contemporary Irish Studies*, eds. Tom Gallagher and James O’Connell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 123.

Yet, the Irish rarely responded to these fears by singing about them, at odds with the fact that virtually every other topic central to 1860s society appears in Civil War ballads. When sentiments about nativism, African Americans and wartime politics did appear, they were connected to interlocking issues that paint an often-contradictory picture. They highlight how an homogenised opinion of Irish Americans in the mid-nineteenth century, centred mostly on the home-front view of the New York diaspora, present too narrow a view that simplifies complicated and ever-evolving attitudes. Contrary to Ural's unsubstantiated claim that 'countless...Irish American poems and songs complained of nativist prejudice and the injustice of the war', Irish American Civil War songs in fact provided countless examples that the diaspora's home-front mentality towards the major issues of the conflict was overwhelmingly pro-active, positive, and articulated a strong voice of Irish inclusion in the pressing issues of the day.<sup>6</sup> If anything, the Irish made use of song culture to present a counter-narrative of wartime sentiments and attitudes. They present a constant shaping and reshaping of soldier and home-front views. They challenge a more linear approach to assessing the Civil War's influence on Irish Americans' relationship to their new position in society and their adoption of contemporary concerns.

### **7.1 Irish Views of Confederate Secession**

Considering the American Civil War was centred on the cornerstone issue of slavery, Irish ballads produced early in the conflict barely mentioned the institution or the diaspora's supportive and critical views of it across the country. There was a subtle slavery hint in the 1862 *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*. It made a passing lyrical comment

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<sup>6</sup> Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 212.

that America was ‘the home of the brave, though not the free’.<sup>7</sup> After the Emancipation Proclamation was issued in January 1863, Irish wartime ballads altered the way they sang about slavery on the rare occasion the subject appeared. Hugh F. McDermott’s *The Irish Brigade*, written in the same month the policy came into effect, described the coming day ‘when Slavery’s power hath passed away and nature’s laws’, meaning the natural rights of men, freedom and liberty, ‘shall rule again’ in the country.<sup>8</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America* (1863) commented how Irish-born and descended soldiers were now fighting not just for reunion, but abolition as well. The song began with a description of the:

Gallant sons of Erin’s isle, of high and low degree,  
Who are fighting in the American states to put down slavery.<sup>9</sup>

The development of lyrical references that appeared to show a level of Irish American Union support for abolition in examples from 1863 echo a sentiment heard in Peter Welsh’s letters to his wife one month after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. ‘If slavery is [in] the way of a proper administration of the...integrity and perpetuity of this nation’ he commented, then ‘both slaves and slavery’ should be removed for good. ‘Sweep both from the land forever rather than the freedom and prosperity of a great nation such as [America] should be destroyed’.<sup>10</sup> The 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts second-generation Irish soldier did not identify as an abolitionist or show sympathy to the plight of slaves. Yet, his military service, and war aim articulations relating to slavery, led Welsh to note that ‘this is a world of changes

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<sup>7</sup> *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862).

<sup>8</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Hugh F. McDermott (New York: Frank McElroy, 1863).

<sup>9</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America/The Soldier’s Letter from America* (Glasgow: James Lindsay, 1863).

<sup>10</sup> Peter Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 3 February 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh, Color Sergeant 28th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, eds. Lawrence Frederick Kohl & Margaret Cassé Richard (New York: Fordham University, 1986), 66.

there is nothing stationary in it'. The divided United States was 'a country of changes' suffering from 'the internal convulsion through which [it] is passing'.<sup>11</sup> For Welsh, Confederate secession disrupted the peace of the nation and slavery's continuance threatened the propagation of American democracy.

Not all Irish-born and descended soldiers and civilians came to this realisation. Another wartime ballad from 1863 was more critical about the vocalisation of abolitionist and emancipation rhetoric. The eponymous Pat of *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* chastised those whom he saw as responsible for pushing the Confederate states into secession and hostility. He reflected one particularly vehement view heard in some communities about emancipation, attacking the abolitionists directly for pushing the policy onto the Union administration's political agenda. Sung from the soldier's own 'voice' thick with a mock-Irish brogue, lyrics commented:

There's a crowd in the North, too, an' they're just as bad;  
Abolitionist spouters so scaly –  
For troubling the naigers I think they deserve  
A Whack from a Sprig of Shillaly!

Pat Murphy's violent note about attacking abolitionists foreshadowed the violence of the New York Draft Riots, but it must be stressed that such an extreme opinion was not reflected in counterpart ballads. Attacks against abolitionist views were kept off Irish wartime song sheets. It is also important to contextualise these particular lyrics in relation to the main subject of Pat Murphy's ire. The description of the abolitionists being 'just as bad' was a comparison to the Confederates themselves, and one secessionist in particular. The four lines prior to these at the start of the verse focused on the President of the Confederate States Jefferson Davis, and Pat Murphy's desire to see him punished for disrupting American unity:

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<sup>11</sup> Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 8 February 1863, *Ibid.*, 69-70.

Jeff. Davis, you thief! If I had you but here,  
 Your beautiful plans I'd be ruinin' –  
 Faix! I'd give ye a taste of my bayonet, bedad!  
 For trying to burst up the Union.<sup>12</sup>

This Irish lyrical threat to attack President Davis with a bayonet echoed violent expressions in *Corcoran's Ball!* (1863). In the final verse, it explained that if 'old Jeff Davis raise but his finger now', Irish-born and descended soldiers would 'soon...be smashing his ugly old sconce'. The song was 'written expressively for...and sung by' Thomas L. Donnelly in his music hall entertainment performances. Its anti-Davis sentiments were met 'with tremendous applause' by home-front audiences who heard it at the Bowery Theatre in Manhattan during the war.<sup>13</sup>

Pat Murphy reiterated a common Irish wartime sentiment that sang of anti-secession views. While their ballads may have been muted in reference to slavery, save for the examples quoted above, secession and anti-Confederate attacks were more frequent. This presents a subtle distinction that while the Irish in America may not have been singing about the institution that was at the heart of the Confederacy and the Civil War, they were certainly singing about its impact and reason for why the conflict was happening. They were also deeply critical about Confederate secession in general. Lyrics adopted Union rhetoric, depicting the southern states as traitorous rebels who would be beaten by Irish-born and descended soldiers. This also helped further the lyrical sentiments of Irish soldiers' fighting spirit and military service pride. Additionally, it was not just those on the front-line who could sing broader anti-secessionist and anti-Confederate views. Everyone, in lyrical terms at least, shared in

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<sup>12</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>13</sup> *Corcoran's Ball!* (1863), quoted by Sara Breitenfeldt, *The Harp of Old Erin and Banner of Stars: Irish Music from the American Civil War* (Ward Irish Music Archive: Lulu Press, 2011), 46. The 'New' Bowery Theatre described on the ballad's songsheet was at the cultural heart of New York's immigrant neighbourhoods.



Columbia's 'mandates made by thy heroes assemble' as *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* explained, avenging the Union 'when secession's cursed form stood in view'.<sup>14</sup>

Numerous songs justified soldiers' war service and the diaspora's support for the Union in relation to their condemnation of Confederate secession. For example, *Corcoran's Irish Legion* (1863) explained that when the Irish general returned from his prison-of-war captivity and 'again' took command of Irish regiments, he was doing so in the continuance of fighting 'till the bonds of Rebellion' were severed 'and peace restored to our dear adopted land'. The song also reminded listeners that the Irish had been involved in this war aim since the start:

When Treason's black Flag was raised in the land...  
The President called: and we rushed, hand in hand...  
To crush out the traitors forever and ever.

The phrase 'traitors are crushed forever' – yet more violent sentiment waged against the Confederacy – was a repeated refrain.<sup>15</sup> Lyrics suggest it was also an order from President Lincoln. *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* described the moment in May 1861 when:

Our President commanded us, and we must hasten o'er,  
For to put down Secession, on the Old Virginny shore...  
For we must go to Washington, to put down the Rebel band.<sup>16</sup>

*The New York Volunteer* (1861) also recalled the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's reason for going southwards to the seat of war. 'Dedicated to the brave Sixty-Ninth', it was another song performed by Thomas Donnelly, where the self-described 'Comedian and Vocalist' adopted the singing persona of an Irish soldier. With a mock-Irish accent, the fictional soldier explained his enlistment before presenting his view of the battlefield enemy:

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<sup>14</sup> *Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*.

<sup>15</sup> *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, Eugene T. Johnston (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>16</sup> *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

I wint down to Virginny, with Corcoran's bould Haroes,  
 To have a hand at skivering [skewer] the Southern would-be Neros...  
 The rebels soon must yield; they cannot stand our banging.<sup>17</sup>

Three months after they left their New York homes, the 'gallant soldiers' of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York who had 'gone to face the enemy and put rebellion down' met on the fields around Manassas, Virginia. In its broadside account of the fighting, *Battle of Bull Run* (1861) described how the militia had 'put to flight with shame, each proud secession leader with bayonet sword and gun'. It told listeners that future Union service would 'make them pay severely for the battle at Bull Run'. It was a lyrical threat again aimed at the 'them' of the Confederacy.<sup>18</sup> The underlying tone was clear: the Irish were prepared to seek fighting justice for their honour and for the American nation.

Song lyrics also presented articulations about how those in the Union challenged and doubted Southern secessionist aspirations to break the United States apart. As part of that questioning, Irish ballads vocalised ardent belief in the ideals of truly unified states. John F. Poole's self-explanatory entitled *Pat's Opinion of the Stars and Stripes* (1862) labelled secessionists as 'blackguards' who were 'ruining' not just *the* country, but also '*our* country'. By 'trying to bust up the Union and pull *down* the Stars and the Stripes', this particular 'Pat' informed listeners that 'we'll' – referring to the Irish in the Union's army and navy – would 'soon bate the blackguards afloat and ashore'. They would ensure 'our flag o'er Fort Sumter be waving once more'. The final verse even suggested that Confederate forces 'better give in' as there was no point continuing the fight, even when Poole produced the

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<sup>17</sup> *The New York Volunteer* (1861), quoted by Robert L. Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1975), 452. Donnelly's stage-name was also printed on songsheets as 'Thomas Donnelly, Esquire'.

<sup>18</sup> *Battle of Bull Run*, F. Collins (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

song in 1862. The Union, with its Irish military and civilian support, would ‘soon gain the day’.<sup>19</sup>

*New War Song of the 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (1862) also questioned why the southern states had seceded and engaged in a battle for their independence. It sang of a ‘curse on those bloody traitors and seceders of the South’ and their attempt to go ‘out of this happy Union’. The 69<sup>th</sup> New York ‘Erin’s sons with swords and guns’ would soon ‘let them know’ that they would be beaten on the battlefield. It also noted another aspect that would ‘prove their overthrow’, with one line questioning the very nature of Confederate mentality in taking the ambitious action to sever the bonds of unity: ‘if they knew what they were doing, they never would go out’ the ballad’s lyrics posited.<sup>20</sup>

It was not just in songs about the famed 69<sup>th</sup> New York and the Irish Brigade where anti-Confederate and anti-secession rhetoric was heard. The 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania ballad *Col. Owens’ Gallant Irish Volunteers* (1861) described how the unit would also join in the fight:

When we march away down south  
The Rebels will get their fill.  
Davis, Lee and General Bragg,  
We’ll make them all stand clear.<sup>21</sup>

Their Irish compatriots in the 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers likewise sang of anti-Confederate retribution. One verse of *Save the Constitution* (1862) sang of their

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<sup>19</sup> *Pat’s Opinion of the Stars and Stripes*, John F. Poole, in *The Camp-Fire Songster: A Collection of Popular, Patriotic, National, Pathetic, and Jolly Songs, Suited for the Camp or March, Containing a Number of Songs Never Before Printed* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 67-68.

<sup>20</sup> *New War Song of the 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, ‘By D.S.F. of East Brooklyn’ (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1862).

<sup>21</sup> *Col. Owens’ Gallant Irish Volunteers*, Arthur McFadden (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, 1861).

mobilisation to help ‘navigate the ship of State, and keep her in full motion’ at the outbreak of the conflict:

When foul rebellious fictions laws this great republic branded,  
As loyal subjects to the cause, the gallant Ninth responded;  
And drew the sword to share her woes and keep down vile disunion  
Until they see this country once more a perfect Union.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, other nationalities voiced similar views about fighting secession and restoring the Union that mirrored Irish sentiments. The 69<sup>th</sup> New York’s Scottish diaspora cousins in the 79<sup>th</sup> New York Highlanders sang of the same anti-Confederate rhetoric in their *War Song of the 79th Regiment*. Written at the start of the war in 1861, its lyrics described the seceded states as abhorrent ‘knaves’ and warned ‘Rebels who our flag have spurned’ that ‘our Union shall not be o’erturned’.<sup>23</sup>

Irish-born and descended Confederate counterpart ballads were similarly coy about the true reasons behind their nationalist independence defence, and equally vocal in their anti-Union rhetoric. The 1861 *Song for the Irish Brigade* contained comments about the Union’s Irish Brigade. It described those who fought in the Army of the Potomac as ‘Lincoln snakes’. The Irish in the Confederacy would ‘exorcise’ Republican, abolitionist and Union policies from the land. Using the same language as the Scottish New York community, this particular Confederate Irish song described Republicans at the start of the war as ‘knaves that rest on Columbia’s breast, and the voice of true men stifle’.<sup>24</sup> This alluded to sectional political concerns that the rights of the southern states, including the right to own slaves, would be curtailed. *Erin’s Dixie*, written two years later in 1863, again reiterated Irish support for the

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<sup>22</sup> *Save the Constitution*, Timothy B. O’Regan (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>23</sup> *War Song for the 79<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

<sup>24</sup> *Song for the Irish Brigade*, in *Hopkins’s New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* (New Orleans: John Hopkins, c.1861), 14-15.

Confederate cause, ‘for Old Virginia’s rights and Dixie’. It described in a proud lyrical voice that ‘the Irishman is a fighting man’ who would continue to ‘make a stand for Dixie’.<sup>25</sup>

In a similar vein, *Kelly’s Irish Brigade* sang of Confederate criticism of Lincoln and Irish support for secession in 1861. Directed at ‘all ye that hold communion with Southern Confederates so bold’, the ballad discussed regional Irish diaspora support for Missouri’s right to leave the Union:

‘Tis but State’s Rights and Liberty we ask;  
And Missouri – we’ll ever defend her,  
No matter how hard may be the task...  
Let the voice of Missouri be obeyed.

The Missouri Irish were thus singing that if the erring state wished to leave the Union, then she had the right to do so. Such a stance meant that pro-Union supporters ‘called us Rebels and Traitors’, but that did not concern them. The ‘cowardly Lincolnites tremble...The Northern fanatics will tremble’ when they would meet ‘Kelly’s Irish Brigade’ fighting in defence of Missouri’s right to join the Confederacy.<sup>26</sup> This was a reference to Captain Joseph Kelly’s regiment in the Missouri State Guards, a unit comprised of predominantly Irish-born and descended men.<sup>27</sup> While the ballad revealed pro-Confederate sentiments among some of the Irish community, as well as local civil strife tensions, they also applied to wider Irish support for Confederate aims. By extension, some general Confederate songs were not just critical of the Union and those fighting for it. *Yankee Doodle’s Ride to Richmond* (1862) contained many anti-Union phrases that were derogatory about the ethnic composition of their

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<sup>25</sup> *Erin’s Dixie*, in *The Southern Flag Song Book* (Vicksburg & Augusta: H.C. Clarke, 1863), 20-21.

<sup>26</sup> *Kelly’s Irish Brigade*, quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 469.

<sup>27</sup> Steven H. Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 99.

opposing army's legions, which included Irish-born and descended soldiers. It described the Union Army as 'a crew of dirty vagabonds' and hurled derogatory criticism at 'thieving Yankees, filthy Dutch [German], and Irish from the Bogs'.<sup>28</sup>

One Irish soldier who would have taken offence at that was Michael Corcoran, who also engaged in his own fair share of anti-Confederate attack in his prisoner-of-war memoir. In a similar way to Irish wartime songs that were critical of the Confederacy's perceived treachery against the nation and the Constitution, Corcoran noted how it was his 'firm belief that' that the United States government and the country had 'been subjected to the insidious power of treachery' by the southern states' secession. He also adopted a vitriolic tone when describing how the Confederacy should be returned to the Union in 'the shortest way to crush out the horrid civil war that is wasting our land'.<sup>29</sup>

Corcoran often offered his personal disdain towards the instigators of what he called 'this most unhappy contest' in his wartime writings.<sup>30</sup> In *Return of Gen. Corcoran of the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>*, written to commemorate his prisoner-of-war release in August 1862, his lyrical language of hostility towards the Confederacy appeared. The ballad presented the sense the diaspora shared in American national ideals in reaction to secession. As with previous examples, the song sang about how a united Irish American force would stop the 'Southern traitors':

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<sup>28</sup> *Yankee Doodle's Ride to Richmond*, in *War Songs of the South* (Richmond: West & Johnson, 1862), 113-119. The song also criticised 'vagrant Hoosiers from the West – a herd of drunken hogs', a reference to soldiers from Indiana.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Corcoran, *The Captivity of General Corcoran: The Only Authentic and Reliable Narrative of the Trials and Sufferings Endured, During his Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Richmond and Other Southern Cities, by Brigadier-General Michael Corcoran, the Hero of Bull Run* (Philadelphia: Barclay & Co, 1864), 43-44.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Corcoran to Charles P. Daly, 13 January 1863, Charles P. Daly Papers and Letters, NYPL.

And in one loud, united voice that rent the very sky,  
They swore they'd put base traitors down, and conquer them or die.

More than that, through their overall Union support the Irish in the song would face:

The Rebel foe, who would destroy the land  
That gave them birth and nurtured them, the dastard rebel band.

These lyrics had dual meaning: the nurturing land encompassed not only the seceded southerners but also second and subsequent generation Irish men and women. Such lyrics reiterated the sentiment that the United States was a true Irish homeland by the 1860s. 'The land' was *their* land.

However, *Return of Gen. Corcoran* also contained a verse with lyrics that raised the complicated issue of war support, its causes and why the Irish were participating in the unifying cause. Written in the immediate aftermath of Lincoln issuing the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, these lyrics offered the first Irish wartime song reference to the specific issue of slave emancipation. It was not one that sang of the action with overwhelming positivity. The Irish had provided their military service because:

'Twas not to subjugate the South, those Irish braves went forth,  
Nor emancipated their negroes to satisfy the North –  
But bring them back unto the laws, their noble sires had made,  
And place again, beneath our Flag, each Southern renegade.<sup>31</sup>

Although the emphasis was still on ending secession, slavery was often the muted voice in the background. This particularly rare song reference made the issue louder. The notion of emancipating the slaves 'to satisfy the North' was another thinly veiled attack at abolitionists and Republicans. It was also, as the date of the Emancipation

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<sup>31</sup> *Return of Gen. Corcoran, of the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>*, William P. Ferris (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1862).

Proclamation's enactment came closer, the first musical rumblings that the diaspora was not fully supportive of this particular Union war aim.

## 7.2 Irish Views of Abolition and Emancipation

The Irish American relationship to the issue of slavery and African Americans during the nineteenth century was complicated. The American Civil War brought to the fore significant racial tensions and attacks against African Americans, especially in its northern urban enclaves. Yet, the complexities of the perceived broader Irish stance need addressing. There was a difference between views on abolition and emancipation for instance. It is important to note that Irish wartime songs, on the rare occasion the topic came up, sang about *abolitionists* not *abolition*. It was the instigators of civil divisions around slavery who were blamed for exacerbating sectional tensions, not the object of their anti-slavery campaign itself. Abolition was tolerable when it did not form a perceived threat to the Irish community. Emancipation during the war did, however, because its results – namely the freeing of former slaves into the labour market – raised concerns centred on the issue of employability competition and a sense that emancipation altered the Union's war aims.

However, historiographical focus has tended to be New York's reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, creating the impression views from the city's Irish community applied to the whole of Irish America. This muddies the combining streams of discontent behind the reason for Irish home-front disquiet in throughout the rest of that year. If the focus was solely on dislike of the Emancipation Proclamation and the fact the act interpreted a new meaning behind why the Civil War was being fought – in other words slavery's abolition and slave emancipation to the fore over the rhetoric about American Union endurance – then the subject would



have been mentioned in contemporary Irish wartime balladry. No topic was ever restricted from broadside publication and the Irish were not necessarily quiet about expressing the fact they were not fighting for abolitionist aims, although they did this infrequently. Emancipation was simply not a topic that appears in any American produced song about the Irish American Civil War experience in this study. The only time it was mentioned was in a ballad written and published on the other side of the Atlantic in Ireland around the summer of 1863. One passage of *Lamentation on the American War* described the Emancipation Proclamation altering Irish understanding about what the conflict was ultimately for. The perceived detrimental impact this would have on the immigrant community was expressed in inflated lyrical language:

America once happy land, but now a scene of woe,  
President Lincoln and his slave bill has proved an overthrow,  
For the thousands of our Irish boys without employment strong,  
The widows and their orphans dear, all in America.<sup>32</sup>

Instead of suggesting emancipation was the issue of discontent, *Lamentation on the American War* reveals that focusing the argument onto one section and cause is too narrow. In keeping with a sentiment hinted at in the lyrics above, but not necessarily its only interpretation, Ural has argued that Irish and African American racial tensions were exacerbated by ‘learning of the horrifying losses’ Irish-born and descended soldiers were suffering on the battlefield. She suggests this began with the ‘losses at the Battle of Antietam’ and Lincoln’s subsequent release of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862. The combined loss and new Union policy meant that ‘the Irish community in America learned that the war was moving in a direction they could not support’, Susannah Ural argues, leading to anti-

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<sup>32</sup> *Lamentation on the American War – Awful Battle at Vicksburg*, quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 459-460.

emancipation stances, continued African American racial hostility, despondency and decline of war support.<sup>33</sup>

That view is too generalised when considering the complex reaction to battlefield losses, the Proclamation, the draft and war meaning debate that took place throughout Union society. In his analysis of the Irish community during the Civil War, which again focuses mostly on the New York Irish experience, Edward K. Spann draws attention to the myriad of positions which differing sections of the diaspora had about all of these issues. Focusing particularly on the riots of July 1863, Spann notes that whilst ‘resentment was intensified by the Emancipation Proclamation, which in Irish eyes, changed the character of the war for the worse’, the policies of freeing slaves and drafting civilians into the conflict stirred deeper tensions centred on Irish economic conditions and long-held views. Certainly, ‘much of the accumulated anger was vented against blacks’ in New York City, yet Spann also emphasises how the Draft Riots did not spring solely from the war itself. Supporting Ural’s stance that their violence ‘was an eruption of the frustrations that had accumulated’ by the middle of 1863, Spann also argues that they revealed frustrations spawned from disquiet about residual antebellum anti-Irish policies. The riot served ‘both as a catharsis for past feelings’ first, and then ‘more tangibly as a modifier of draft policy’.<sup>34</sup>

Even so, when these diaspora tensions and amalgamated influences that combined during the New York City Draft Riots are considered, what is often overlooked in historiographical studies of the Irish in the Civil War is that over the

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<sup>33</sup> Susannah J. Ural, “‘Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble’: Northern Irish American Catholics and the Union War Effort, 1861-1865”, in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America’s Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. Ural (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 115.

<sup>34</sup> Edward K. Spann, “Union Green: The Irish Community and the Civil War”, in *The New York Irish*, eds., Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 203-204.

course of this same period, a significant ideological split started to develop between the Irish-born and descended soldiers on the front-line and their families and the rest of the diaspora in the home-front. It is a divide that Corcoran himself articulated in one letter to his friend Charles P. Daly ten days after the Emancipation Proclamation came into effect. 'I must acknowledge that I am not as full of hope and confidence as to the probable ultimate results of this most unhappy contest as when I last saw you', the Irish-born general told his friend. He indicated a sign of war-weariness that reflected more general sentiments across the Union by the middle point of the conflict. Corcoran admitted to Daly that his mood was likely exacerbated by recent events, commenting that 'I may be unnecessarily disappointed on account of the results of late battles'. This was a passing reference not just to the encounters of his own Corcoran's Legion, but also to the events of the Battle of Fredericksburg one month prior to penning his correspondence. He would have known about the fighting losses encountered by the Irish Brigade on Marye's Heights, which included the remnants of his own former 69<sup>th</sup> New York.

Additionally, Corcoran attributed his apparent malaise in relation to the 'anticipated result of the Proclamation etc.', the only time in his letter conversations to Daly where he mentioned wider Union government administration policies. As with contemporary Irish wartime songs, he made no other reference to the Emancipation Proclamation or what his own views on the matter were. It is possible to read his comment from a military point of view, that such a policy could cause further low spirits in a bruised Union Army which would in turn impact home-front war spirit mentality. It is also possible Corcoran shared many of the racial prejudices of his Irish and American countrymen, although there is little indication of this in his surviving writings. He ended this commentary to Daly by stating how 'I almost

earnestly hope that matters may soon assume a much more favourable aspect', both in terms of the Union Army achieving victories and a hope the disquiet about emancipation would soon diminish.<sup>35</sup> Such a view highlights the discord that emerged between the Irish fighting on the front-line and the home-front diaspora over the course of 1863 and 1864 as wartime policies and politics seeped into soldier and civilian discussions and Irish wartime balladry.

### 7.3 The New York City Draft Riots

'I am very sorry that the Irish men of New York took so large a part in them disgraceful riots' Peter Welsh wrote in 1863. This was the third letter he had sent to his wife Margaret between 17 July and 2 August that year on the subject of the New York Draft Riots and the Irish involvement in the violence. His prolonged commentary not only reveals how news was disseminated between the front-line and home-front, but also how much the actions of his fellow diaspora countrymen bothered him. 'God help the Irish', Welsh stated, 'they are to easily led into such snares which give their enemys an opportunity to malign and abuse them'.<sup>36</sup> The enemies were both Confederate supporters and anti-Irish nativist sympathisers in the Union. It was a view directed at the discord between understanding soldier and home-front opinions over the summer of 1863 about the draft, enlistment and the place of the diaspora in American society. It can also be ascribed to historical scholarship's often critical understanding of this turbulent period and the draft divide that can be heard in Irish American cultural responses to the policy.

The Enrollment Act of March 1863, coming after the Emancipation Proclamation's introduction that New Year, furthered societal tensions. The New

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<sup>35</sup> Corcoran to Daly, 13 January 1863.

<sup>36</sup> Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 2 August 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue*, 115.

York Draft Riots did not ignite suddenly. Events were a culmination of varying strains coming together. As Marjorie R. Fallows highlighted, ‘for the Irish, conscription was particularly objectionable since it came almost simultaneously with emancipation’. It raised disquiet because the act ‘required the Irishman to fight for’ former slaves who would become their ‘competitor in the labour market’ at the end of the war, at least in the point of view of some in the diaspora.<sup>37</sup> It also raised the pressure over the Irish American Union home-front’s level of involvement and willingness to join in voluntary support of the war effort. A clear divide between the service in the first two years of the conflict and the peak of tensions in summer 1863 appears to have been drawn, at least in the historiographical depictions of the context behind Irish draft dislike as highlighted above by Ural and Spann’s arguments.

The impact of heavy Irish Brigade losses and Thomas Francis Meagher’s fair but relatively small recruitment drive successes gives the impression that Irish-born and descended soldiers’ eagerness to fight diminished. Ural has suggested that sections of the diaspora perceived the draft as punishment on the community; the battlefield service of fathers, husbands, brothers and sons was not recognised by American society. She argues that ‘increasing numbers of Irishmen saw their sacrifices as unappreciated’, a fact exacerbated by ‘news reports questioning the quality of Irish military service’ and negative commentary that accused ‘the Irish of serving in numbers far below their representation in the populace’. Such criticisms, and a seemingly unfair draft policy, led to the diaspora arguing that conscripting the Irish in 1863 was ‘a means for allowing native-born Americans to avoid the hardships of war’.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Marjorie R. Fallows, *Irish Americans: Identity and Assimilation* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 38.

<sup>38</sup> Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 176.

These arguments ignore the conflicting voices within the diaspora about the draft and what its implementation meant to the place of the Irish in American Union society. Irish American Civil War songs provided readers, listeners and performers of balladry with more positive commentary on the service of Irishmen and acted as encouragement for the home-front to join the war effort voluntarily, which they continued to do for the rest of the conflict even after the New York events of July 1863. Although the numbers were low, the crucial fact that Irish-born and descended soldiers still enlisted – and sung about enlisting – is absent from historiography altogether. They show that there was not one overall negative view of the draft to which the whole diaspora ascribed. The homogenising of Irish American Civil War experience falls short of focusing on these competing and complex views on the front-line and home-front.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in his recent work on non-New York Irish regiments, Ryan Keating has criticised the way in which the Draft Riots have come seemingly to represent the whole Irish American Civil War experience ‘despite the fact that this event was hardly emblematic of the sentiments of Irish Americans’. Keating is right to stress that the Draft Riots should not be ‘symbolic of lingering questions surrounding loyalty to the United States’.<sup>40</sup>

Even before the introduction of the draft, songs directed at the home-front sang of Irish enlistment. In 1862, the comic music-hall style ballad *O’Toole & McFinnigan On the War* depicted a lyrical conversation between ‘two Irishmen out of

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<sup>39</sup> Draft Riot studies are part of the wider issue of Irish American homogenisation discussed in the Introduction. Again, the New York experience is often applied to broader diaspora views, which is a problem for Draft Riot analysis as many Irish communities did not see the same violent reaction and decried New York’s behaviour. See Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, eds., *The New York Irish* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and Mary C. Kelly, *The Shamrock and the Lily: The New York Irish and the Creation of a Transatlantic Identity, 1845-1921* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007) for examples and essays that demonstrate this regional micro-level focus transposed onto broader macro-level national Irish American history.

<sup>40</sup> Ryan Keating, *Shades of Green: Irish Regiments, American Soldiers, and Local Communities in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 11.

employ', Paddy O'Toole and 'Misther McFinnigan'. The two men 'were smoking about taking it lazily' and talked about enlisting in the Union Army. O'Toole stated:

I think of enlistin' ...  
Because, do you see what o'clock it is?  
There's nothin' adoin' at all'.

This presents a view that enlistment was a way of removing boredom, but with an economic benefit in that the army would provide Irishmen with jobs. O'Toole continued this vein by singing about how there would be no jobs 'until after the war', so there was some immediate value in donning a uniform. Both then enlist, inspired 'to think of bould Corcoran leading us right into the camps' of the Confederacy, reiterating the influence Michael Corcoran had on views of Irish fighting service. They also commented that 'Secession's...so black the devil himself ought to father it!' This song was likely written in late 1862 when Corcoran had returned from prisoner-of-war captivity and was recruiting for his legion of New York regiments. These fictional Irish enlistees were telling the home-front in both New York, and in Boston where it was also published, to join with the famed commander:

“‘Tis Corcoran will lead ‘em, d’ye mind,  
And I will go with them”, says McFinnigan.<sup>41</sup>

When the draft was introduced in 1863, Irish songs were not critical of its conscripted service policy. In songwriter and music hall performer Eugene T. Johnston's 1863 *Who Will Care for Micky Now?* – 'a parody on *Who Will Care for Mother Now?*' – there was brief reference to the act, but it did not bemoan the Irish soldier's lot or voice criticism of its perceived diaspora discriminatory nature. A note on James Wrigley's song sheet publication described how the Limerick-born

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<sup>41</sup> *O'Toole & McFinnigan On the War* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1862).

‘Mickey’ singing the song was one ‘amongst the many heroic fellows who drew a prize in the U.S. lottery’ when the draft came to his state. The lyrics then sing Micky’s conversation to ‘his sweetheart’ where he informs her that ‘I am drafted’. Lyrics acknowledged that he must become a soldier ‘to fight the rebel foe’ and ‘soon ‘gainst rebels I’ll be marching’.<sup>42</sup> However the song was really singing about how this fictional Irishman would cope with being a soldier. The refrain ‘who will care for Micky now?’ referred to the fact he had never survived by himself. It was not about being drafted to fight in the war. Johnston’s music hall parody on the popular wartime ballad *Who Will Care for Mother Now?* removed all the lamenting sentiment of the original, creating a satire of masculine soldiery with the image of a terrified Micky learning to cope with a soldier’s life. This was in contrast to other images of valour and brave self-sacrifice presented in contemporary wartime ballads about Irish-born and descended soldiers. The song was a comment to the home-front that now the draft had been enforced, Irishmen were to take up the heroic mantle of dutiful American Union defenders.

A further contemporaneous song that sang of the Irish in relation to the consequences of drafted service was *When This Cruel War is Over – No. 2*. Another parody song – of Charles Carroll Sawyer’s 1863 Union and Confederate ballad *When This Cruel War is Over* – this as a specific Irish version. It was sung from an already-enlisted Irish soldier’s perspective, who had ‘shoulder’d my ould musket’ and:

Braver thin [than] ould Mars...  
 With spirits light and airy,  
 Marched off to the wars.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Who Will Care For Micky Now?* Eugene T. Johnston (New York: James Wrigley, 1863). Given the propensity of Irish songs originating from New York City, it is likely Johnston’s ‘Micky’ was referring to the draft coming to the city in the summer of 1863.

<sup>43</sup> *When This Cruel War is Over – No. 2* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).



War weariness had begun to creep in though, as the soldier sang about how ‘I am homesick I fear’. He would ‘give this world for a substitute’ to swap with him and ‘take my place here’ in the ranks. This was a reference to the fact the draft opened up the possibility of substitutes to stand in for draftees if they were able. Yet, instead of becoming a commentary on how draft and substitution policies would impact recruits from the diaspora, the song adopted a more traditional folk song theme about an Irishman and his sweetheart. There was even a verse on soldiers’ food but nothing about the war itself. Therefore again, Irish wartime balladry did not dwell on draft vagaries to any great extent.

Even a small sample of private letters and accounts show how diaspora members did not have a uniform view of events. Maria Lydig Daly, who witnessed many of the riots’ initial developments while her husband helped to restore order, was extremely critical of the draft’s New York implementation. She noted in her diary on 14 July 1863 that it was ‘very foolishly ordered by the government, who supposed these Union victories would make the people willing to submit’. This was a reference to recent successes at Gettysburg and Vicksburg ten days before rioting broke out. In her mind:

The principal cause of discontent was the provision that by paying three hundred dollars any man could avoid serving if drafted, thus obliging all who could not beg, borrow, or steal this sum to go to the war. This is exceedingly unjust. The labouring classes say that they are sold for three hundred dollars.

Maria Daly exhibited many of the racial and class discontented Irish American views historians have focused on when analysing why the Irish in New York reacted the way they did over these four bloody days. While mentioning the fact rioters had ‘hung

in the streets!’ African Americans, she never condemned the Irish instigators of such actions.<sup>44</sup>

In her next diary entry, she reflected on the ‘four days of great anxiety’ and the ‘fighting [which] went on constantly in the streets between the military and police and the mob’. Maria noted ‘the greatest atrocities have been perpetuated...the mob [had] such a brutal manner than nothing in the French Revolution exceeded it’. Yet, while she claimed to now ‘feel quite differently’ about events and ‘very sorry and much outraged at the cruelties inflicted’, this wife of a prominent member of New York’s Irish American elite could not hide her racial prejudice, negative views about emancipation and her ethnic-blindness about who she thought was responsible for what had happened:

I hope it will give the Negroes a lesson, for since the war commenced, they have been so insolent as to be unbearable. I cannot endure free blacks. They are immoral, with all their piety. The principal actors in this mob were boys, and I think they were American.

Maria Daly refused to acknowledge her husband’s own parental countrymen had carried out much of the worst violence. If anything, her diary entries justified the brutal riots actions by members of New York’s Irish diaspora.

The reaction of the rioters was based on politics, namely anti-draft and anti-emancipation attitudes. Maria Daly described the reasoning behind the targets for the worst of the violence as a result of the fact that ‘this mob seems to have a curious sense of justice. They attacked and destroyed many disreputable houses and did not always spare secessionists’, bringing together objects of wartime discontent in New

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<sup>44</sup> Maria Lydig Daly, 14 July 1863, *Diary of a Union Lady, 1861-1865*, ed. Harold Earl Hammond (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 246-248.

York City.<sup>45</sup> Although Daly does not mention him, one leading member of the Irish American military community also received his own share of hostility. Former 69<sup>th</sup> New York officer and Irish Brigade Colonel Robert Nugent, originally from County Down, was serving as a provost marshal in July 1863 while recovering from wounds sustained at the Battle of Fredericksburg the previous December. His position as ‘director of the draft in the city’ made him a target for the Irish rioters, regardless of his status as a member of the famed Irish Brigade. Ural has noted how ‘the Irish mob...broke into his home, raced through his rooms, destroying the furniture and slashing photographs’, both of Nugent himself and, allegedly of Thomas Francis Meagher. Ural has concluded this indicated ‘Irishmen blamed Nugent for the draft and Meagher for the high casualties’ sustained by Irish-born and descended soldiers thus far in the conflict.<sup>46</sup>

Nugent’s house was certainly attacked, but his role as one of New York’s draft instigators was never referred to on the three of occasions he made an appearance in Irish American wartime ballads. Like Meagher and Corcoran, Nugent was only sung about with praise. Another epitome of a successful Irish American Union Army officer, he appeared in songs about both the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and the Irish Brigade. For example, when *The Irish Brigade in America* depicted the unit’s memorable encounter with Confederate forces at Fredericksburg, lyrics noted how ‘the 69<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup> [New York] were first upon the field’. They were ‘led on by Col. Nugent, determined not to yield’.<sup>47</sup>

Nugent also appeared alongside Meagher as an example of a typical Irish soldier. One *Irish Volunteer* song from the time of the Irish Brigade’s formation

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<sup>45</sup> Daly, 23 July 1863, Ibid., 249-251.

<sup>46</sup> Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 180.

<sup>47</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America*.

wished ‘success to Meagher and Nugent, and their Irish volunteers’.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, he appeared in *Our Brave Irish Champions* to commemorate the Irish contribution to the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861. Here Nugent’s lyrical appearance did not end well as the song sang erroneously about how ‘Nugent fell dead of his horse, all bleeding in his gore’.<sup>49</sup> His subsequent Civil War service, eventual command of the Irish Brigade as its last leading general, and later American Indian Wars service, made Nugent the longest surviving Irish-born American Union officer sung about in wartime ballads. Even though these song examples were written prior to the Draft Riots, no evidence of Irish rioters’ hostility towards Nugent appears in contemporary popular balladry.

Nugent served as reminder that there were Irish-born and descended men and women who were not against the policy of conscripted service and did not see it as being unduly unfair on the Irish home-front community in the Union. Ural notes that ‘it is significant that not all Irish Catholic volunteers and civilians opposed the draft’, though these contradictory voices are relatively mute in studies of this aspect of the Irish American Civil War experience.<sup>50</sup> Lawrence J. McCaffrey highlighted how ‘almost all of the policemen and a large number of the soldiers on riot duty were as Irish as their opponents’, including some of the returning Irish soldiers from Gettysburg who helped subdue the unrest.<sup>51</sup> Given the fact that the wider Irish community was not united on the issues of the draft and emancipation, or sympathised universally with the rioters, the lack of anti-draft and riot rhetoric in wartime songs is thus understandable.

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<sup>48</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*, quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 472-473.

<sup>49</sup> *Our Brave Irish Champions: A New War Song on the Great Battle Fought in America! On Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> of July, 1861*, Thomas Walsh (Cork: Haly, 1861).

<sup>50</sup> Ural, ‘Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble’, 124.

<sup>51</sup> Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America* (Indiana University Press, 1976), 69.

Peter Welsh's continued correspondence on the issue is perhaps the most-quoted example in Irish American Civil War era studies, but it is also the best articulation of anti-Draft Riot view as seen from the perspective of an Irish American soldier being critical of the home-front's actions. Welsh told his wife that he was 'sorry to hear there is such disgraceful riots in New York', caused by 'bloody cutthroats' who 'should be hung like dogs'.<sup>52</sup> He believed ardently that 'every leader and instigator of those riots should be made an example of', including Irish men and women. Welsh was a strong supporter of the Enrollment Act, stating that in his mind 'no conscription could be fairer than the one' than the one being enforced. Acknowledging that 'it would be impossible to frame it to satisfy every one', Welsh saw the draft as important to the wider Union cause:

[It] will show the south that we have the determination and the power to prosecute the war and they have no possible means of raising an adequate force to oppose the army we can raise by this conscription.<sup>53</sup>

Both Welsh and Daly hinted at a sentiment in their writings that New York's reaction to the draft was damaging to the war effort and gave ammunition to Confederate attacks about internal Union divisions over conflict support. It also revealed concerns that if some in the Union civilian community were not in support of the war, it damaged the acknowledgement of battlefield service and sacrifice the Irish contributed to. Welsh's particular strong anti-Draft Riot views were heard in the final Irish American Civil War song that made reference to the policy and to the riots themselves. Printed in *The Continental Songster* in 1863 after the events in New York City, *Paddy the Loyal* emphasised the need for the Irish home-front diaspora to show strong American Union support. Although disagreeing with them herself, Maria Daly

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<sup>52</sup> Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 17 July 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue*, 110.

<sup>53</sup> Welsh to Margaret Welsh, 22 July 1863, *Ibid.*, 113-114.

had noted a concern that the violent show of seeming disloyalty to Union war policies ‘will give the rebels encouragement’.<sup>54</sup> *Paddy the Loyal* (1863) took this further by stating that those not in support of the Union were effectively pro-secession and Confederate sympathisers. The final verse sang directly to rioters and anti-draft members of the diaspora:

Oh! Ye secesh sympathisers,  
Hould your hush, that my advice is;  
If ye’s won’t fight, don’t talk disloyal,  
Nor aid the scamps who would destroy all.<sup>55</sup>

Thus the overwhelming sentiment in popular culture song articulations by and about the Irish in relation to issues of emancipation and the draft was one of fervent Union support and pointed commentary at the Irish home-front diaspora to show loyalty and support the war’s policies, at least publically. Not doing so would raise questions over how committed to the American nation they were.

#### **7.4 No Irish Need Apply and Displays of Lyrical Loyalty to the American Union**

There was one crucial reason behind Irish American Civil War songs’ emphasis on articulating this loyalty and why lyrics sought to remind the diaspora that it needed to show American Union allegiance to the fullest extent through continued volunteer enlistment and Lincoln administration support. Although muted by comparison to its peak in the 1850s, anti-Irish nativist views were still directed at pockets of the diaspora, especially in eastern urban centres such as New York. The notion the Irish had not contributed a fair share to war service touched on latent concerns about the diaspora’s national loyalty. This view has also pervaded some historiographical study,

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<sup>54</sup> Daly, 14 July 1863, *Diary of a Union Lady*, 248.

<sup>55</sup> *Paddy the Loyal*, ‘by Himself’, in *The Continental Songster: A Collection of New, Spirited, Patriotic Songs, For the Times* (Philadelphia: A. Winch, 1863), 36-37.

with Ural arguing that the draft riots did nothing to ‘strengthen the position of those who hoped to display Irish American military service as proof’ of loyalty and patriotism. Instead the action, albeit in one area of one part of the diaspora, helped ‘nativists’ portrayal of them as violent, selfish, and untrustworthy’.<sup>56</sup> *Paddy the Loyal*’s lyrical sentiments correspond to this opinion.

Conversely, there is a question in historiographical studies about how widespread nativist views still were during the American Civil War. Older Irish transnationalist studies have argued that ‘anti-Catholicism had receded as a public passion’ by 1856 as the stance took ‘a subordinate position to the sectional tensions between North and South’ and the outbreak of conflict drew near.<sup>57</sup> More recent approaches have put this view in relation to war service and sectional differences across the wider Irish diaspora in America. For example, Malcolm Campbell has pointed out the importance of seeing The Nativist American Party’s ‘Know Nothing’ political views in regional context, arguing that their anti-immigrant nativist stances ‘fared less well away from the eastern seaboard’. Differing ‘political climate and economic prospects between the most densely populated East Coast cities and inland regions’ impacted how much of the diaspora were subjected to nativist attack from those sympathetic to this political view.<sup>58</sup> This speaks to debate over the relative national strength of the Nativist American Party’s local political influence, as their anti-immigrant nativist arguments – aimed mostly at Catholic immigrants including the Irish and Germans in the country – took hold in the wider political system evolution of the early 1850s antebellum United States. Campbell’s argument about regional nativist political stance strength/weakness also relates to how long such

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<sup>56</sup> Ural, *Harp and the Eagle*, 180.

<sup>57</sup> McCaffrey, *Irish Diaspora in America*, 95.

<sup>58</sup> Malcolm Campbell, *Ireland’s New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 51.

opinions were maintained by society across the country, as anti-immigration became supplanted in the immediate political climate of the secession crisis and eventual war from the late 1850s.<sup>59</sup>

This historiographical opinion is supported by lyrics in one Irish Brigade song written in January 1862, not long after the unit was officially formed. The penultimate verse of *The Irish Brigade* claimed boldly:

The Know-Nothing warfare is ended –  
 No longer they say we're untrue;  
 And now Erin's Green flag is blended  
 Among with the Red, White and Blue.<sup>60</sup>

In the song's view, the main body of anti-Irish, anti-Catholic attack in the form of Know Nothing supporters had collapsed by the Civil War. This was a reference to the nativist party's decline after the 1856 presidential election, in line with McCaffrey's argument. Their ideas may have dissipated into the political climate of the late 1850s and 1860s war period, but in this Irish American ballad's view, it was an anti-Irish stance that the diaspora no longer needed to be worried about. In addition, the first six months of the war helped expel latent nativist attacks as Irish-born and descended soldiers proved they were not 'untrue' to the nation. The reference to the two dual flags of Ireland and America united on the battlefields reinforced the sense of loyalty to the Union cause. This *Irish Brigade* ballad had been written in Woburn, Massachusetts, but it sang of a wider view about the central part the Irish played in defence of the country. Its lyrics could be interpreted by the Irish on the home-front as

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<sup>59</sup> The Nativist American Party/American Party's political peak can be observed in the 1854 elections, but declined as political attention turned towards the question of slavery and Southern secession. Those in the party opposed to slavery would be subsumed into the rising Republican Party machine. The colloquial 'Know-Nothing' moniker originated in the group's early secret organisation when members denied its existence. The term was common in contemporary discourse, as reflected in Irish wartime lyrics below that recalled this nativist stance against their place in American society less than a decade before the Civil War.

<sup>60</sup> *The Irish Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, January 1862).



saying they needed to adopt the same loyal mentality and support as the soldiers on the front-line. Former nativist social and political ‘warfare [was] ended’; the only concern for the Irish in America was now the conflict between the Union and Confederate states.

The most important Irish cultural responses to mid-nineteenth century American nativism were lyrical replies to ‘No Irish Need Apply’ (NINA) rhetoric employment stances. During the Civil War, at least three *No Irish Need Apply* ballads were written, making these social commentaries wartime songs in their own right. They mostly sang to wider home-front society, but they also served to remind the Irish that displays of loyalty and American national association were to be maintained. This sentiment is often missing in studies of these songs, ignoring how the phrase was used to make a pointed and satirical attack at those stoking nativist sentiment. Exalting the military service of the Irish in the Civil War demonstrated that the group had the right to apply to any position. In Richard Jensen’s troubling analysis of NINA cases, he argues these songs were ‘sung only by the Irish’.<sup>61</sup> That cannot be corroborated. Jensen provides no evidence about how he came to this conclusion. These songs were published by printers unconnected to the diaspora, they were disseminated and performed across society, and they could be sung with an American voice as much as an Irish one to emphasise the point that NINA rhetoric needed to end. At no point does Jensen provide wartime contextualisation for these songs’ production. Nor does he mention, in his brief analysis of these cultural outputs, that their lyrics were overwhelmingly positive about the conflict and Irish service in it.

For example, in music hall performer and ‘Irish Vocalist’ Kathleen O’Neil’s 1862 version, lyrics began with a description about a ‘simple Irish girl...looking for a

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<sup>61</sup> Richard Jensen, “‘No Irish Need Apply’: A Myth of Victimization”, *Journal of Social History*, 36:2 (2002), 140.

place' of work. The ballad then sang of anti-Irish nativist attacks and defended the Irish as being hard working making valuable contributions to the country. It stressed former Irish foreign military service as one of the most important contributions. Lyrics reminded American society that the service of Irish-born and descended soldiers on the battlefields should be evidence of loyalty that would make nativist attacks stop. Its final verse also made a comment that feelings towards the Irish in America were changing in this period:

I can see by your kind faces, that you will not deny  
A place in your hearts for Kathleen, and All Irish may apply.

These lyrics were not only a reference to Irish home-front employability, but also to men serving in army and navy ranks. Multiple copies of this NINA ballad were circulated after its first performance sometime in spring 1862. Publishers in New York, Boston and Philadelphia kept the song in production through the war.<sup>62</sup>

In John F. Poole's lyric version of *No Irish Need Apply*, also first written in 1862 and performed on the home-front by the non-Irish 'great Comic Vocalist of the age, Tony Pastor', the same sentiments were expressed but this time from a more recent male immigrant perspective. Lyrics described how 'in America...an Irishman is just as good as any other man' and that any nativist and NINA attitudes were a minority-held view. The final verse of Poole's song focused specifically on the war and Irish-born and descended soldiers' service in particular. As conflict broke out, the 'lasting fame' of Irish foreign military endeavours suddenly made them attractive

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<sup>62</sup> *No Irish Need Apply*, Kathleen O'Neil (Ohio: S. Brainard & Co., 1863). When Brainard's Ohio-based publishing house printed this musical scorebook in 1863, the O'Neil NINA song had been printed and sold by Oliver Ditson in Boston, and by the Philadelphian printing houses of J.H. Johnson and Lee & Walker who published the song in 1862. O'Neil's version was also the only NINA ballad that provided context for why the song was written: a note was added above songsheet and music scorebooks that re-printed the February 1862 *London Times Newspaper* notice: 'WANTED – A smart active girl to do the general house work of a large family; one who can cook, clean plate, and get up fine linen preferred. N.B. – No Irish need apply'.

fellow fighting citizens: ‘yet when they want good fighting-men, the Irish may apply’ it sang. Nativist ‘fools may flout and bigots rave’ at the thought of this Irish contribution to the Union war effort, but the song returned to the sentiment that the group were willing to participate and ‘for freedom and the right they raise the battle-cry’. This action would dampen anti-Irish commentary. Indeed, the song ended on a satirical comment that the only people who should protest Irish fighting service were Confederates because the Irish were such good fighters that their soldiering contributions, and by extension their support on the home-front, would only serve to strengthen the Union cause. When seen on the battlefields ‘then the Rebel ranks begin to think: No Irish need apply’ lyrics joked.<sup>63</sup>

The link between combating any anti-Irish sentiment with lyrical expressions of Irish fighting praise was heard in *What Irish Boys Can Do*, whose subtitle was *Answer to ‘No Irish Need Apply’*. The song was both an ‘answer’ to *NINA* songs such as Poole and O’Neil’s, and an ‘answer’ to *NINA* viewpoints in wider society. Written in 1863, the song was a product of the atmosphere of societal suspicion about Irish loyalty to the war. *What Irish Boys Can Do* (1863) was directed at both American and Irish critics of the draft policy who questioned military enrolment and those who ‘insult an Irishman...[and] call him green’. Battlefields examples would be the ‘answer to those dirty words: No Irish need apply!’ Like O’Neil and Poole’s songs, the final verses focused specifically on the conflict. It is worth quoting its lyrics at length for its recall of wartime examples relating to Corcoran, Meagher, James Shields and the Irish Brigade’s service, and how Irish-born and descended soldiers’ sacrifice and displays of Union loyalty on the front-line should not be ignored across the home-front:

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<sup>63</sup> *No Irish Need Apply*, John F. Poole (New York, H. De Marsan, 1862).

And then, too, in the present war between the North and South  
 Let no dirty slur on Irish ever escape your mouth;  
 Sure, did you ne'er hear tell of the 69<sup>th</sup> who bravely fought at Bull-Run?  
 And Meagher, of the seven days fight, that was in front of Richmond  
 With General Shields, who fought so brave for the Flag Red, White and Blue?  
 And anything like a bayonet-charge the Irish boys can do.  
 Then, why slur upon the Irish? Why are they treated so?  
 What is it you've against them? Is what I want to know;  
 Sure, they work for all they get, and that you can't deny!  
 Then, why insult them with the words: No Irish need apply?

The song ended with a reminder that society would 'find all things that's noble the Irish folks can do', singing a sentiment that the Irish in America were committed citizens of the nation.<sup>64</sup> To the diaspora – and to the small number of New York City Irish rioters – it was singing a suggestion that continued public disagreement with war policies would undo the work of Irish military service and reignite nativist slurs against much of the Irish Catholic community.

NINA-related wartime song lyrics all emphasised the need for collective Union civilian unity and presented the feeling that the Irish in America were, and should remain, committed citizens of their new homeland. In many ways these lyrical sentiments echoed the words of former Young Irelander Thomas D'Arcy McGee in 1855 during the peak of American anti-Irish nativist campaigns. In *A History of Irish Settlers in North America*, McGee described how the American Union had long been a saviour for Irish migrants. Whatever the momentary political climate, the nation was to be valued and, ultimately, defended:

The Union gives us homes, suffrage and wages: the Union gives us  
 peace, plenty and equality; the Union protects our alters, confers our

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<sup>64</sup> *What Irish Boys Can Do – Answer to 'No Irish Need Apply*, William Sutherland (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863).

lands, accepts our services in peace and war and educated our children.<sup>65</sup>

In 1864, McGee's views were heard in lyrical form in another wartime *No Irish Need Apply* ballad production. It again sang of Irish commitment to the nation and war aims. Moreover, it reinforced to the diaspora the need to emphasise support through military service and overall loyalty in the aftermath of draft conscription and African American emancipation. The reason for this was a universal sense of common brotherhood as united Americans:

Let us all united be, and true men all around,  
And let no petty feelings yet in any heart be found...  
Let us join both heart and hand, and this the reason why,  
We all should meet in Heaven, where all nations *may* apply.<sup>66</sup>

*NINA* song responses, and the examples quoted above such as *Paddy the Loyal* and *O'Toole & McFinnigan On the War*, were singing to both American society and the Irish home-front diaspora that the Irish were committed to the Union cause and nation. They also served to stress, through broad popular culture, a message of unity and loyalty that runs counter to many of the more biased, negative commentary in nativist and diaspora presses that questioned Irish war involvement and government administration actions respectively. Ballads served to influence the diaspora's attitudes across the country while singing simultaneously of American association to the whole of society. Songs could therefore be used to spread and emphasise particular messages to communities. In the aftermath of the New York Draft Riots, one Irish-born songwriter would demonstrate this practice better than any of his wartime lyricist contemporaries.

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas D'Arcy McGee, quoted by Aspinwall, "Irish Americans and American Nationality", 113.

<sup>66</sup> *No Irish Need Apply* (Philadelphia: William A. Stephens, 1864).

### 7.5 Charles Graham Halpine

Born in County Meath, Charles Graham Halpine had been a resident in the United States for over a decade by the outbreak of the Civil War and was already familiar in New York's Irish American community as a writer, poet-lyricist and journalist. His poetry collection *Lyrics by the Letter H*, published in 1854, and his subsequent story serialisations, newspaper writings and books – many of which were produced during the conflict – made him one of the most prolific Irish writers in the Civil War era. Halpine's early military career was also tied to the beginnings of the Irish wartime service. He acted as an aide to Michael Corcoran when the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia mobilised in immediate response to Lincoln's call for troops and travelled to Washington D.C. with the unit. He was soon transferred to serve under General David Hunter as his adjutant. In addition, Halpine was well-connected to New York Democratic circles, including those dominated by the Irish American political elite in the city, and for time he served as a 'Democratic party propagandist'. However, as the war continued, and in the wake of the Emancipation Proclamation and draft reactions, he 'aggressively backed the efforts of Lincoln's administration to build popular support for the war'. He did this 'especially among the New York Irish after the July 1863 riots'.<sup>67</sup>

Halpine 'publicised the communal meanings of Irish American service' and guided the diaspora's wartime opinion by employing the services of a fictional Irish soldier he created in 1863.<sup>68</sup> This character was Private Miles O'Reilly of the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New York Volunteers, self-described by Halpine as 'one very humble

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<sup>67</sup> William Hanchett, *Irish: Charles Graham Halpine in Civil War America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970), xiii.

<sup>68</sup> Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 112.

soldier’.<sup>69</sup> Halpine’s initial stories, printed in the *New York Herald*, began on 8 September 1863. He depicted O’Reilly as a seasoned soldier who had:

Become quite famous in a small way throughout the Department for comic songs and impromptu verses about the incidents of the day...An odd character named Miles O’Reilly, who has frequently relieved the monotony of camp life by scribbling songs on all sorts of subjects, and writing librettos for the various ‘minstrel companies’...Printed in regular street ballad form.<sup>70</sup>

Through his fictional depiction of O’Reilly as a song-writing soldier, Halpine described the dissemination process of lyrics from the front-line to the home-front, as well as the practice of passing on the Irish tunes many of his songs were set to in just the same way as traditional folk tunes had passed into American musical culture:

He got them printed, and they soon were in the hands of nearly every soldier – the men singing them with intense and uproarious relish to an old Irish air, slightly altered...which Private O’Reilly taught them.<sup>71</sup>

So convincing were Miles O’Reilly’s initial stories that in the home-front ‘many viewed Halpine’s writings as genuine expressions of soldier opinion’. That made Halpine’s creation the perfect lyrical voice to sing pro-Union and pro-Lincoln administration sentiments from 1863 onwards. After laying the fictional foundation of a soldier-songwriter career, Halpine employed Miles to spread messages about war policies and politics that began with commentary directed at the diaspora itself. In the aftermath of the New York Draft Riots, General John A. Dix ‘was charged with pacifying the city’ and restoring order, especially amongst aggrieved Irish communities. Aware that ‘the majority of the rioters were Irish’, and likely familiar

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<sup>69</sup> Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, x.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; 26. Halpine described these fictional references to O’Reilly’s earlier song productions as ‘containing little poetry [and] as full of sense as an egg is full of meat’.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

with his lyrical verse talents, ‘Dix appointed Halpine as his assistant general and asked him to bolster Irish support for the war’. Halpine responded by penning songs and stories that were, as Christian McWhirter has argued, ‘intended to shape both the public image of the Irish and northern political views’.<sup>72</sup> He began with a song that attempted to sing to the whole of American society about an issue that was mute in every other Irish wartime ballad: the service of African American soldiers.

Halpine/O’Reilly’s *Sambo’s Right to be Kilt* reflected ‘the occasionally intense debate among Union white soldiers’ and civilians of all backgrounds about the issue of African American Union Army enlistment.<sup>73</sup> Lyrics claimed:

Some tell us ‘tis a burnin’ shame  
To make the naygers fight;  
And that the thrade [trade] of bein’ kilt  
Belongs but to the white.

Yet, the song went on to explain that ‘the right to be kilt’ – or ‘killed’ in a non-mock Irish accent – should be divided equally between white and black men in uniform.

The singing voice of Miles himself argued:

I shouldn’t at all object  
If Sambo’s body should stop a ball  
That was comin’ for me direct.<sup>74</sup>

In essence, the song presented a view that if African Americans wanted to fight, serve, and crucially die, instead of white soldiers, then that should be supported.

Breaking from O’Reilly’s direct voice, Halpine noted under the song that its

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<sup>72</sup> Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 92. Halpine only mentioned the Draft Riots in a brief comment when Miles O’Reilly visited New York City and passed ‘the black open space on Fifth avenue where the Colored Orphan Asylum lately stood. You see similar black spaces in Third avenue and elsewhere. These are the vestigia nigra of our late anti-draft, anti-negro riot’, Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 121.

<sup>73</sup> Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era*, 99-100.

<sup>74</sup> *Sambo’s Right to be Kilt*, Charles Graham Halpine (New York, 1863).



sentiment was full of racist views and language, and that despite its apparent ‘liberal’ approach, was still heavy with prejudice:

Whatever may be thought of the spirit animating this ditty – which certainly is extremely devoid of any philanthropic or humanitarian cant...its popular diffusion resounded undoubtedly to the best interest of the service.<sup>75</sup>

Halpine was making a satirical point about American racist views towards free blacks and ex-slaves serving in the army, while still exhibiting racial sentiments for public resonance. In his mind, the song served to highlight to white society that more men serving was good, and if African Americans wanted to be placed in the front-line before white soldiers then that could well reduce casualty lists. All this was done in the spirit of honouring the right to fight and die for the country’s unity.<sup>76</sup>

The issue of African American army service was a familiar one to the Irish officer. When Halpine served with Hunter in the early years of the conflict, he had seen first-hand the general’s abolitionist stance in support of ex-slaves fighting.<sup>77</sup> His experience of the debate around this issue was reflected in *Life and Adventures of Private Miles O’Reilly*, published in 1864 when Halpine’s initial O’Reilly songs and stories were collected together. After re-printing *Sambo’s Right to be Kilt*, Halpine discussed Hunter’s own position in great detail:

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<sup>75</sup> Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 55-56.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 57. Halpine’s biographer William Hanchett further argued that *Sambo Right to be Kilt*’s ‘humour was cruel and cold-blooded, but that was the secret of its success. Halpine’s reasoning could persuade whites to accept blacks as soldiers without in the least disturbing their fundamental prejudices against [African Americans]’, Hanchett, *Irish*, 70.

<sup>77</sup> Major General David Hunter, described by Erin Foner as ‘the few abolitionists in the officer corps’, was one of the first Union commanders to free slaves in the Department of the South in May 1862. Hunter let male ex-slaves volunteer to serve. He acted on his own orders, leading to Congressional concern the general was going against Lincoln’s pre-Emancipation military policies and forming black regiments. The fact Halpine alluded to this story over a year after Hunter’s actions indicates the impact it had on wartime debates over emancipation and subsequent African American Union Army service, Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 206-208.

General Hunter...urged the matter forward purely as a military measure, and without one syllable or thought of any 'humanitarian proletarianism'. Every black regiment in garrison would relieve a white regiment for service in the field. Every ball stopped by a black man would save the life of a white soldier.<sup>78</sup>

Halpine not only re-circulated this argument in the middle of the conflict and justified the Union's need for African American service. Through his song, Halpine subtly reminded the diaspora and wider society that any anti-African American racial prejudice they held was misdirected. Not only would African Americans provide more soldiers to bolster Union forces, but they would also serve in the fight for democratic republican freedom which the Irish, especially those holding nationalist sympathies, supported.

McWhirter has noted how Halpine's clever establishment of O'Reilly's songs and stories aided the dissemination from a fictional cultural output to a real one. Using 'several techniques' the Irish soldier-songwriter 'accomplished several goals', highlighting how 'by claiming the song was popular and authentic, it became both'.<sup>79</sup> Circulated first in the *New York Herald*, and later in Halpine's Miles O'Reilly books, *Sambo's Right to be Kilt* spread through Irish and wider Union society. It was also re-printed along with the sheet music for five pieces in *Songs of the War by Private Miles O'Reilly* in 1864. By publishing his works in non-diaspora specific settings – in other words not printing his songs in *The Irish-American* – Halpine reinforced Irish concerns within wider societal contexts. That is not to say he abandoned his Irish roots entirely. One of the fundamental reasons *Sambo's Right to be Kilt* was

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<sup>78</sup> Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 57.

<sup>79</sup> McWhirter, *Battle Hymns*, 94. Halpine noted how in fictional life 'white soldiers...began singing it around their camp-fires at night, and humming it to themselves on their sentry-beats'. As *Sambo's Right to be Kilt* began circulating in reality, the story became true, Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 56.

‘immediately popular...extensively reprinted’ and successful was because it had been, in the words of Halpine’s biographer William Hanchett, ‘written to a familiar melody...which nearly everybody could sing’.<sup>80</sup> That familiar tune was *The Low-backed Car*, another variant title of the familiar *Irish Jaunting Car*. It is telling that Halpine, like Harry Macarthy, used this established Irish and American tune for this particular song and subject matter. Halpine’s choice was deliberate, knowing how familiar it was across the country. He was following a practice of setting lyrics to popular tunes to aid their dissemination, particularly when the important subject matter raised in this song spoke to communities whose speed at picking up the ballad was aided by their knowledge of its musical context.

After *Sambo’s Right to be Kilt*, Halpine’s O’Reilly songs ‘focused on the Americanizing, communal experience of military service’ and election issues.<sup>81</sup> His songs centred on unity, including lyrical commentary about local politics involving members of the Irish American community. In particular, Halpine drew attention to internal divisions within New York City’s Democratic and political ‘machine’ organisations. Miles O’Reilly described the situation in the 1863 *The Bust Up of the Machines*:

Things looks mighty quarely  
In the dimmycratic party of this daycint [decent] town;  
The maines is busted.<sup>82</sup>

Halpine was most critical of Democratic party divisions over how the war should be conducted and ended, hinting at the divisions emerging in 1863 and 1864 between soldiers’ views and home-front political opinions. *Song of the National Democracy* was especially pointed at Democrat splits, singing how ‘in November we’ll have an

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<sup>80</sup> Hanchett, *Irish*, 70.

<sup>81</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 112.

<sup>82</sup> *The Bust Up of the Machines*, Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 63-67.

almighty big row' as the war, peace and Copperhead elements of the party would debate at local and national level about what political stance to take in relation to Lincoln, Republicans and the Union war effort. The song described 'November's slate smashing grand row', initially a reference to the 1863 New York state elections when it was first circulated, and later applied to the 1864 presidential election when re-printed in *Life and Adventures*.<sup>83</sup> Halpine himself was connected to many of the New York political actors who appeared in his satirical songs, including those in the Irish-dominated Tammany Hall sections. His words were aimed deliberately at those who had diasporic political influence and argued that the whole Democrat Party's machinations needed to unite for the sake of the war. This was mostly because Halpine, by this point in the conflict, exhibited strong Lincoln and Republican leanings.<sup>84</sup>

The Irish-born Union Army officer lyricist wordsmith had strong ties to Lincoln and his closest advisors and secretaries, which influenced his favourable view of the administration. Halpine moved in the highest political and military circles throughout the Civil War, serving as a close confidante and aide to Generals Corcoran, Dix, Halleck and Hunter. He often visited the White House with many of them and had 'frequent contacts with Lincoln'. He even visited the president at his summer 'cottage' on the outskirts of Washington D.C. and Lincoln made several appearance in Miles O'Reilly stories as the fictional soldier met and sang to him. Halpine, in reality, was a pro-Lincoln War Democrat who 'supported the

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<sup>83</sup> *Song of the National Democracy*. Halpine set this song to the Scottish air *Bonnie Dundee*.

<sup>84</sup> Halpine was particularly scathing about the corrupt state of wartime New York politics. In one satirical story, he described 'the clock in the cupola of the City Hall...had a musical box attached to its machinery, which, as time slipped on, poured forth such popular airs as *That's the Way the Money Goes* [aka *Pop Goes the Weasel*], and *Come, Brothers, Join the Mystic Ring* in one continuous melody', *Life and Adventures*, 123-124.

administration's war at the same time as he opposed the administration'.<sup>85</sup> If anything, his personal experience indicated the complicated nature of Union politics, especially in the final half of the conflict. While the homogenised historical view of the Irish in the mid-nineteenth century has suggested they were all ardent Democrat Party supporters, the Civil War raised complications to this depiction.

Although direct Democrat and Republican Party rhetoric is absent in Irish balladry, the diaspora would have been familiar with how the community's leaders altered their stances in relation to wartime politics. For instance, Corcoran and Meagher, like Halpine, supported Lincoln's administration. Meagher especially 'embraced the Republican Party and its broader view of rights'.<sup>86</sup> As David Gleeson has argued, by the end of the war the Irish-born general was 'willing to abandon his former soldiers for the lure of political office with the Republicans'.<sup>87</sup> Corcoran, had he lived, would have likely done the same. Samito has also highlighted the fact that towards the end of the war, 'prominent Fenians' seemed to embrace more radical Republican elements as the atmosphere of American politics changed during the conflict. Echoing Halpine's O'Reilly song messages, in 1865 some Fenians 'offered black regiments', which Samito has seen as 'a surprising moment of radicalism linking some Irish Americans with African Americans during the Civil War'.<sup>88</sup>

Halpine therefore expressed the core themes underlying Irish American Civil War songs: the diaspora could well be Democrat-leaning, but their Union support came before all other concerns. Nevertheless, one particular political issue in 1864 did find its way into balladry produced by soldiers and civilians: the presidential election

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<sup>85</sup> Hanchett, *Irish*, 55; 132.

<sup>86</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 186.

<sup>87</sup> David T. Gleeson, "Ethnicity", in *A Companion to the U.S. Civil War*, ed. Aaron Sheehan-Dean (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 786.

<sup>88</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 186.

and George B. McClellan's candidacy. McClellan was no stranger to wartime songs. The general appeared in compositions from the start of the conflict and was the prime subject of the popular and controversial *Give Us Back Our Old Commander*, which circulated society despite attempts to have it banned on account of its critical Union administration rhetoric. He also made appearances in early Irish wartime ballads. For example, *The Irish Volunteer* by Joe English gave a lyrical cheer to the general:

Here's to brave McClellan, whom the army now reveres –  
He'll lead us on to victory, the Irish volunteers.<sup>89</sup>

The Irish also penned their own call for McClellan's continued Army of Potomac command in *We'll Fight for Uncle Sam* (1863), which explained how Irish-born and descended soldiers would fight better when led by the general:

We soon will use the Rebels up, and make them all surrender,  
And, once again, the Stars and Stripes will to the breeze be swellin',  
If Uncle Abe will give us back our darling boys McClellan  
Oh! We'll follow Little Mac.<sup>90</sup>

McClellan earned Irish-born and descended soldiers reverence during the war mostly due to the mutual respect he had shown them after the Battle of Antietam in 1862. His report of the engagement praised the contributions of 'the brave Irish Brigade' who 'sustained its well-earned reputation' during the fighting.<sup>91</sup> When McClellan left his command, the praise returned when he 'passed the Irish Brigade during his final

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<sup>89</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*. The Irish were not the only ethnic group to praise McClellan in song. One German American version of *New York Volunteers* included the lyrics: 'Raise your voices with one accord, and give them hearty cheers, for McClellan, Scott and Siegel, and their Union Volunteers!' *Our German Volunteers*, in *Camp-Fire Songster* (1862), 31-32.

<sup>90</sup> *We'll Fight For Uncle Sam* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863) in Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 473.

<sup>91</sup> George B. McClellan, quoted by W.F. Lyons, *Brigadier General T. F. Meagher; His Political and Military Career, With Selections from his Speeches and Writings* (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson, 1871), 90.

farewell'. As McClellan reached them, 'Meagher ordered the Irish men to throw down their green battle flags in an act of devotion'.<sup>92</sup>

By the 1864 election, the Irish continued displays of 'Little Mac' devotion by writing ballads in support of his presidential campaign. Several of these came direct from the home-front, continuing a practice that had started in 1862 when verses from *War Democratic View of McClellan's Nomination* were printed in the *New York World* and re-published in *The Irish-American* before November local elections.<sup>93</sup> Two years later in 1864, *The Cry is Mac, My Darling* followed the same dissemination route after being 'written by an Irish soldier in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps' (in which the Irish Brigade served). Set to the traditional Irish air of *Oh, My Nora Creina Dear*, the song expressed Irish delight 'to hear that you've been nominated, referring to McClellan's presidential candidacy. He would be claimed as 'our chosen chief' come the election.<sup>94</sup> The same sentiment was heard in October 1864 when *The Irish-American* printed *The Irish for McClellan*, penned by a 'T.F.L'. This ballad-verse described McClellan as 'a soldier right sterling and true...a statesman and patriot too'. Recalling Irish cultural heritage, it stated:

McClellan will, therefore, receive, without fail,  
The votes of the sons of Old Graineumhail.

When McClellan became president, the final lyrics hoped that he would help the Irish win their own independence fight and achieve 'the great stroke of Freedom for Graineumhail'.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ural, 'Ye Sons of Green Erin Assemble', 115.

<sup>93</sup> *War Democratic View of McClellan's Nomination*, Corporal Casey Solus, *Irish-American*, 8 October 1864.

<sup>94</sup> *The Cry is Mac, My Darling*, *Irish-American*, 17 September 1864.

<sup>95</sup> *The Irish for McClellan*, T.F.L', *Irish-American*, 22 October 1864. 'Graineumhail' was another iteration of 'Granuaile'.

These songs reflected views being sent from the front-line to the home-front in correspondences. The 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Irish Brigade soldier Daniel Crowley wrote about how McClellan needed to return to army command in August 1864. Until he did so, ‘no good [would] be done here’ in the siege around Petersburg, Virginia.<sup>96</sup> In the November, he wrote about the election while still entrenched at Petersburg:

We have received no authentic information so far as to who will be President of the United States for the next four years. Some say Lincoln and...[others] little Mack. I hope it’s the latter for the country’s sake.

Ultimately, however, McClellan lost the election and Irish songs ceased to sing about him. In many ways, Crowley articulated a pervading war-weary sentiment about the situation in the aftermath of the 1864 election: ‘not that I care a great deal for my part as I am rather indifferent’.<sup>97</sup>

By comparison, Halpine was not indifferent to the politics of 1864, but nor did he follow an expected Irish pro-Democrat and pro-McClellan party line. Instead, through his Miles O’Reilly singing voice, he urged the Irish diaspora and wider Union society to keep faith in Lincoln’s presidency. Halpine’s *Song of the Soldiers*, printed in the *New York Herald*, re-circulated in *Life and Adventures*, and published song score collections of O’Reilly ballads, explained that political divisions did not matter. Soldiers were soldiers – they acted as one body and thought with one mind. Soldiers believed that Lincoln was where ‘the future government of the United States is centred’, telling the home-front of front-line voting intentions. While never saying ‘vote for Lincoln’ directly, Halpine used the same rhetoric of extolling Union soldier

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<sup>96</sup> Daniel Crowley to Cornelius Flynn, 7 August 1864, Daniel Crowley Letters to Cornelius Flynn, BA.

<sup>97</sup> Crowley to Flynn, 12 November 1864.



and American citizen similarity that had been expressed throughout the war. In the final verse, Halpine made a pre-election heartfelt plea to put America first:

By communion of the banner –  
 Battle-scarred but victor banner,  
 By the baptism of the banner,  
 Brothers of one church are we!  
 Creed nor faction can divide us,  
 Race nor language can divide us,  
 Still, whatever fate betide us,  
 Children of the flag are we!<sup>98</sup>

Likewise, Halpine's *The Blue Cap and Button* stressed that Lincoln had the majority of support and the voting for him was the only option, regardless of other military and political opinions. While 'there are some, you know, for McClellan will go – the 'old braves' who still admired him – Halpine used O'Reilly to stress the majority of soldiers were still loyal to Lincoln. Irish-born and descended soldiers were 'the boys of the host that has suffered the most' and part of:

The Army of Potomac  
 Who have dyed with their blood Virginia's fields  
 The color of the sumac.

Yet, regardless of that fact, Halpine was then more specific in stressing Irish soldiery praise for the president:

In West and in East there's one...  
 Around whom the army might gather –  
 'Uncle Abe', it is you, honest, kindly and true –  
 To us boys you have been a father.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *Song of the Soldiers*, Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 178-180.

<sup>99</sup> *The Blue Cap and Button*, Halpine, *Life and Adventure*, 187-188.

This Irish Union Army officer's lyrical point was clear: return Abraham Lincoln to the White House and all would be well in the eventual outcome of the war and across the wider American nation.

Halpine's later war lyrical outputs raise a question about how 'Irish' his works really were. Comparable to Michael Corcoran, Halpine articulated a strong sense of Americanness and American national identity, something that was passed onto O'Reilly's 'voice' in his fictional story song creations. O'Reilly's mock Irish singing brogue was dropped, as can be heard in ballads about the 1864 election. Yet, Halpine's works were still singing *to* the diaspora, and were singing *about* the diaspora to wider Union home-front society. He created clever arguments, through song and satire that showed how the war was, in his view, doing away with nativist prejudice. Secession had brought the country and the ideal of a united Union together. Through publication and circulation in the *New York Herald*, re-printing in *Life and Adventures* in 1864 and *Baked Meats of the Funeral* in 1866, song music score books, and post-war writings, Halpine's expressions of an Irish Americanness and Irish conceptualisation of American commitment to the war, political administration and policies were reinforced, re-circulated and reached further across society than any of his lyricist contemporaries. *Life and Adventures of Miles O'Reilly* was 'an immediate success, selling three thousand copies on the first day, exhausting the first printing' and met with widespread praise and 'enthusiastic reviews...all over the country'.<sup>100</sup>

Thus Halpine's message of unity spread widely. As the sheer relentlessness of warfare took its toll on soldier and home-front mentality from 1863 onwards, it was also met with growing support from all sections of society. One of the final O'Reilly wartime songs was *The Blue-Bellies to the Grey-Backs: A Dream of Universal*

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<sup>100</sup> Hanchett, *Irish*, 94.

*Dominion*. An ‘entirely pathetic, and yet entirely manly’ ballad, it called for the Union and Confederacy to reunite for the future prosperity of the nation. Arguing that the conflict had become ‘a fight ye cannot win’ and telling the Confederacy to surrender, Halpine’s lyrics were aimed across the whole country:

Brethren, thus we stand confronted...  
 Tired and bloody but undaunted –  
 Shall the work again begin?  
 Shall the cry again be slaughter,  
 Your blood, our blood shed like water...  
 Brethren, join us – stand beside us –  
 Both have wrongs to wipe away...  
 Let our flag, with forces blended,  
 O’er the world, serene and splendid,  
 Henceforth bear imperial sway!<sup>101</sup>

Halpine urged the whole country to think of reconciliation and the nearing time when North and South would come together as a powerful, united, global nation that all citizens would help bring forth. This echoed the dedication Halpine ‘respectfully inscribed’ for *Life and Adventures*: ‘to our Navy and our Army; to all good citizens...and to patriots of every class and nationality throughout the United States’.<sup>102</sup>

Those ‘patriots of every class and nationality’ included his fellow Irish countrymen and women. Halpine’s words were similar to a sentiment heard in *Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade*, which expressed the diaspora’s sadness at the fraternal damage civil conflict was doing to the country. ‘It’s a shame for to see Brothers fighting in such a quare [queer] manner’ it sang, mirroring Halpine’s

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<sup>101</sup> *The Blue-Bellies to the Grey-Backs: A Dream of Universal Dominion*, Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, 214-215.

<sup>102</sup> Halpine, *Life and Adventures*, iv.

continual call for reunion.<sup>103</sup> Halpine's belief in unity permeated every aspect of his wartime writings: he wished for the rioters and home-front to share the same war position as their fighting family members, he wished for local and national party unity to strengthen Union administration war policies, and he wished for eventual unity between the warring states. Halpine was a consummate believer in the union of the United States, an Irishman born across the Atlantic who had come to value the ideals of his second homeland nation as paramount. That was the message he spread to his Irish and American brethren. It was in keeping with cultural articulations by Irish soldiers and civilians who likewise expressed their devotion to the United States and their sense of Americanness through song.

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<sup>103</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade.*



## **Chapter 8**

### **‘The Union Forever, With Your Last Dying Breath’ Irish American Loyalty and Identity in Civil War Songs**

No individual Irish American Civil War song ever centred on a single issue – lyrics about volunteering, fighting, home-front matters and occasional nationalist sentiments combined to form verses covering multiple themes. However, through their words and lyrical emphasis, one attitude kept coming to the fore. It underlined every opinion discussed in this study and it came to the forefront of articulations that centred on the symbols and rhetoric Irish-born and descended soldiers fought for. Above all other sentiments in Irish American Civil War song lyrics, inherent loyalty to the United States, to ideals of freedom and liberty, to the Star Spangled Banner and to the American home nation infused Irish wartime ballads. Songs often concluded with strong statements that reinforced Irish support for the United States as citizens that shared in the nation’s beliefs and reconciled future, encapsulated by fixing on the Stars and Stripes as the emblem of their American identity association.

This was demonstrated in *Battle of Bull Run* (1861), which explained that in the aftermath of the conflict’s first engagements, Irish regiments and ‘gallant soldiers’ serving in the Union Army had ‘gone to fight a glorious cause’ on behalf of the whole nation. They were ‘gone to the battle field of fame’ to fight and ‘defend the glorious Stars and Stripes’. Soldiers and the home-front upheld the right ‘to defend the Flag and Union, the Government and its laws’.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the Irish in America served to defend the very structure of the nation in which they resided.

This chapter will demonstrate the way Irish American Civil War songs articulated loyalty and allegiance to the American nation through singing about how

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<sup>1</sup> *Battle of Bull Run*, F. Collins (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

the diaspora shared in the ideals of liberty, democratic republicanism and freedom, and how these were bound up in American national symbols and anthems associated with devotion to the Star Spangled Banner. By singing about defending the nation, and adopting the Stars and Stripes as their own flag, the Irish who fought and sung in the Civil War not only cemented their commitment to the American Union but also articulated their allegiance to the nation as Americans. Even in the few existing Confederate songs about the Irish fighting for the seceded southern states, a pervading sense of loyalty to the American side of dual Irish American identity comes to the fore.

The fact that these songs circulated home-front society through publications and performances in music halls ensured that Irish lyrics about American sentiments permeated wartime culture. They stressed to the diaspora and wider society that the United States was central to the Irish experience of living, working and fighting in the nation to which many had emigrated, resided in and raised families. What such lyrics demonstrate is the manner in which the diaspora expressed its sense of participatory American citizenship as naturalized citizens in the 1860s. As Christian Samito has pointed out, the concept of 'national citizenship' was 'vague...prior the Civil War' and for the most part 'largely functioned to determine whether one owed allegiance and certain obligations to the United States'. Additionally, 'even the meaning of naturalization remained unsettled' at this time. Irish American army and navy volunteers framed their allegiance and obligations within the mentality of doing one's duty serving the country in which they settled.

By singing about home-front and battlefield contributions, the Irish in the Civil War era reflected what Samito has described as the 'interrelated sides of citizenship'. Aside from being 'a political creation and a legal concept', citizenship

also existed on a more encompassing ‘social and cultural level’.<sup>2</sup> Wartime songs certainly reflect this notion. This chapter will conclude by demonstrating the way in which Irish American Civil War ballads, when singing about America, were actually singing about the concept and association of the United States as ‘home’, reflecting the final aspect of how the diaspora perceived the nation in which they lived and fought.

### 8.1 Irish Adoption of American Ideals

Extending his definition of immigrant diasporas’ contribution to and understanding of citizenship in the 1860s, Samito has stated that ‘a distinctively American citizenship crystallised’ during the Civil War, enhanced by involvement in the conflict. This became a concept ‘that eventually integrated national rights and duties along with notions of loyalty and the embrace of American ideals’.<sup>3</sup> With regards to the latter point, songs expressed how the Irish in America had embraced the ideals of freedom, liberty, democracy and republicanism that the United States had expounded since its founding.

In early 1862, one Irish Brigade song stressed that Irish-born and descended soldiers ‘rushed to Columbia’s aid’ when Confederate ‘traitors, unholy, conspired to pull down the flag of the free’. These fighting ‘brave sons of Erin desired’ to become ‘the vanguard of freedom’ in the Union Army, serving at the forefront of the battle to calm the erring southern states and restore the nation once again.<sup>4</sup> By singing about how the Irish Brigade was critical to the Union’s military might, the song emphasised the impression that war service was tied to a ready desire to see the United States

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<sup>2</sup> Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1-2; 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> *The Irish Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, January 1862).



reunited as a bastion of liberty and freedom in the world. This sentiment was shared in ballads produced on the other side of the Atlantic, such as *The Soldier's Letter From America*. Printed in Glasgow in 1863, it likewise sang about Irish Brigade exploits and explained that the Irish unit fought 'in the loyal cause of freedom on the American shore'.<sup>5</sup> Even when Hugh F. McDermott's epic ballad verse about the Irish Brigade's experience at the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862 sang of the death and loss of so many sons of Erin, lyrics still stressed that the sacrifice was worth it for the cause of freedom the American Union embodied. In the ballad's final four lines, it explained how these soldiers had 'died for glory more sublime' fighting for the future of democratic freedom over secessionist slave tyranny:

Fame blushed for Fame, as heroes fell...  
While Freedom struck their funeral knell,  
Which rings for aye on the ear of Time.<sup>6</sup>

The same sentiment could be heard in *The Sons of Erin's Isle*, published in London in 1864 during the second half of the conflict. The ballad sang about how the Irish 'sons of Erin's isle' who had 'left their native soil' of Ireland were greeted with warmth in the American land to which they had emigrated, omitting any mention of anti-Irish nativist feeling. Instead, the Irish 'will be welcome to that noble land of freedom'. Come the war itself, the Irish fighting in the Union Army would be doing so because the United States had become 'their country for to save' and 'their lives they freely gave in the right of their countrymen'.<sup>7</sup> This notion was reinforced in *Freedom's Guide* (c.1862), a song about the Irish 69<sup>th</sup> New York. Its final line stressed how they would 'show them how the Sixty-Ninth can fight'. The 'them'

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<sup>5</sup> *The Irish Brigade in America/The Soldier's Letter from America* (Glasgow: James Lindsay, 1863).

<sup>6</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Hugh F. McDermott (New York: Frank McElroy, 1863).

<sup>7</sup> *The Sons of Erin's Isle* (London: W.S. Fortey, c.1864).

meant both the Confederacy and wider American nation, highlighting Irish fighting commitment mentioned previously in this study. The rest of the song sang about ‘countless [Irish] throngs shall fill the land’ and ensure ‘our country’s rights maintain’. Here once more the collective rhetoric of ‘our country’ was America, not Ireland. ‘Our guide is Freedom’s banner’, one lyric stated, singing how the Stars and Stripes would guide soldiers on the battlefield. They would serve not just because they were Irish-born and descended citizens living the in the country. *Freedom’s Guide* explained that the Irish in the Union Army were fighting ‘as Yankee boys’.<sup>8</sup> They fought as Americans.

Irish wartime songs that communicated commitment to ideals of freedom echoed the sentiments Peter Welsh articulated to his father-in-law in Ireland explaining why he had joined the war effort. Couching his justification in a global framework, he argued that American values were the same as Irish values: ‘we have the same national, political, and social interests’ to ensure democratic republicanism survived. This was important not just ‘for ourselves but for coming generations and the oppressed of every nation’ because American freedom and the nation ‘was a common asylum for all’. For the Irish, ‘America is Ireland’s refuge, Ireland’s last hope. Destroy this republic and her hopes are blasted’, the 28<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts sergeant believed.<sup>9</sup> This presented a view of the United States as the last best hope on earth for a nation conceived in liberty: sentiments Abraham Lincoln discussed in his address at Gettysburg five months after Welsh was writing. At the end of the war, one Fenian song presented a similar opinion as it sung about the possible return to Ireland

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<sup>8</sup> *Freedom’s Guide* (c.1862), quoted by Alfred M. Williams, “Folk-Songs of the Civil War”, *The Journal of American Folklore*, 5:19 (1892), 269.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Welsh to Patrick Prendergast, 1 June 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh, Color Sergeant 28th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, eds. Lawrence Frederick Kohl & Margaret Cassé Richard (New York: Fordham University, 1986), 101-103.

by the diaspora's soldiers in a future fight for independence against Britain. Reiterating the Fenian lyrical articulation about the need for American aid to ensure Irish independence success, *The Gleam of Hope!* (1865) depicted the moment when returning nationalists would 'plant the Flag of Liberty' on Ireland's shores.<sup>10</sup>

In his lengthy letter, Welsh also informed his father-in-law that the American nation was more than just a country to defend. It was a symbol of ideals that were worth fighting for. 'Many powerful motives that influence Irishmen to take up arms in defense of this government', he stated, including upholding the ideals of that government as *Battle of Bull Run* had sung. Welsh concluded:

Such motives as impelled those brave sons of Ireland General Shields, Mulligan, Corcoran, and T.F. Meagher, with many others talented and influential to unsheathe their swords and expose themselves to all the hardships and dangers of war.<sup>11</sup>

Welsh's view suited similar lyrical rhetoric that elevated Irish American Union Army generals as exemplar loyal soldiers who fought to uphold freedom and liberty in the United States. When Michael Corcoran made an appearance in the verses of *Corcoran to His Regiment* (1861) he told his 'gallant band' and diaspora in general that they should fight 'for God and for the Union of our dear adopted land'. Moreover, Corcoran sang to soldiers: "'Liberty and Union" be your battle-cry' as soldiers volunteered and marched to war.<sup>12</sup>

Such grand concepts of 'Liberty and Union' also harked back to older American history. Adopting the language of the American Revolution reinforced the sense of Americanness behind Irish service. In Thomas J. MacEvily's *War Song of*

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<sup>10</sup> *The Gleam of Hope!* Jason Tully (New York: James Wrigley, 1865).

<sup>11</sup> Welsh to Patrick Prendergast, 1 June 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue*, 101-103.

<sup>12</sup> *Corcoran to his Regiment, Or 'I Would Not Take Parole'*, 'Words and Music by an Irishman' (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1861).

*the Irish Brigade* (1861), Revolutionary rhetoric was evoked as citizens ‘once more...awaken to liberty’s call’ and ‘rise up in might in defense of the nation’. To enforce the American sentiments of this particular Irish Brigade-dedicated ballad, MacEvily set his lyrics to the national anthemic tune of *The Star Spangled Banner*.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, ‘William’, the fictional lyrical focus of *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade*, was described as ‘a Patriot, and a soldier, in the Sixty-Ninth Brigade’.<sup>14</sup> Here ‘Patriot’ did not hark back to the Irish Patriots of the 1700s, but the Patriots of the Revolution in whose spirit this particular Irish soldier followed.

The same universal notions of American liberty could also be heard in Irish wartime ballads written about the diaspora’s contributions to the Confederate Army. By comparison to songs about American Union loyalty, *Erin’s Dixie* (1863) emphasised that the Irish in the seceded southern states would ‘make a stand for Dixie’ and ‘swear to stand or fall with Dixie’ through the course of the war. This sentiment was reiterated throughout the song, enhanced by the repetitive final chorus refrain:

We’ll stand or fall with Dixie, hurrah! hurrah!  
 Dixie’s land we’ll take our stand,  
 And strike a blow for Dixie.

The songs stated that the reason for this ardent Confederate support was because the Irish were fighting for freedom. Using the same justifications for secession as heard throughout the Confederacy, *Erin’s Dixie* explained how the Irish would fight against the American Union:

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<sup>13</sup> *War Song of the Irish Brigade*, Thomas J. MacEvily, *The Irish-American* (New York), 30 November 1861.

<sup>14</sup> *The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade*, F. Collins (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

The Irish blood is high and red,  
 It always flowed where Freedom bled,  
 As now it does, it does in Dixie;  
 For Faith and Freedom freely flows it,  
 Each battlefield in Dixie shows it.<sup>15</sup>

The same view was expressed in *Kelly's Irish Brigade*. The song sang of Missouri's right to secede from the Union and join the Confederacy. The Irish in the state would join the Confederate cause because it represented liberty and freedom. Calling on 'all ye that hold communion with Southern Confederates so bold', *Kelly's Irish Brigade* criticised the American Union for calling secessionists 'Rebels and Traitors'. In the song's view, those serving in this particular Irish Confederate Army unit were fighting for 'State's Rights and Liberty, and Missouri'. These were the three united bodies that Irish-born and descended Missourians would 'ever defend...no matter how hard may be the task' as the state battled with its own internal civil conflict.<sup>16</sup> The ballad stressed to wider Confederate society that the Irish in the South would be loyal to the Confederate cause. It did so using the same lyrical language as their American Union counterparts.

One of Missouri's residents also penned 'additional words to *Bonnie Blue flag* as sung by the Missourians during the war' in 1861. They echoed *Kelly's Irish Brigade's* sentiments. Sung to the old traditional Irish tune of *The Irish Jaunting Car*, these supplementary lyrics to Harry Macarthy's pro-Confederate secession anthem called for Missouri to join her southern state sisters in secession. In the middle of its two verses, this personal *Bonnie Blue Flag* version used rhetorical concepts of

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<sup>15</sup> *Erin's Dixie*, in *The Southern Flag Song Book* (Vicksburg & Augusta: H.C. Clarke, 1863), 20-21.

<sup>16</sup> *Kelly's Irish Brigade*, quoted by Robert L. Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1975), 469.

freedom and liberty to validate Missouri's right to become part of the Confederate States of America:

Now ye southern patriots  
A nation you have made  
We'll fight for life and liberty  
Until oppressions stayed.<sup>17</sup>

Both Missouri songs – one connected directly to Irish residents in the Border State and the other with set lyrics to an Irish musical tune – reflect the way the Irish experience in the American South contained both American and Confederate national identities, while also retaining a sense of ethnic cultural heritage from Ireland. They were part of a broader and evolving Irish Confederate American nationalism, a sentiment that has received attention from David Gleeson. He argues that 'the Irish...had to negotiate their identity with a developing American one' in the middle of the nineteenth century. As 'Confederate nationalism was basically negative, confused and contradictory' itself, the diaspora had find a way to articulate their Confederate loyalty in opposition to Union support while still using rhetoric about fighting for American concepts of freedom and liberty.<sup>18</sup> These two Irish-related Missouri examples are in many ways microcosms of wider Confederate identity development tensions during the Civil War.

*Song for the Irish Brigade* (1861) furthered this rhetoric across the Confederacy by singing more broadly about how the Irish would fight for their southern state homes and uphold secession on the battlefield and home-front. This again created opposite comparative arguments to songs about the official Union Army

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<sup>17</sup> 'Additional words to *Bonnie Blue flag* as sung by the Missourians during the war' (c.1861), handwritten page of verses placed inside the *Virginia Songster* (Richmond: J.W. Randolph, 1863), BA Confederate Collection.

<sup>18</sup> David Gleeson, "'To live and die [for] Dixie': Irish Civilians and the Confederate States of America", *Irish Studies Review*, 18:2 (2010), 141; 147.

Irish Brigade ballads that used the same lyrical stances in defence of the American nation. The Irish Confederate ballad aimed its anti-Union opinion at the federal government, Lincoln administration and Washington D.C. in particular. Its words presented the impression the Irish in the southern states would head to the capital to ‘free’ the city, the government, and by extension the nation itself, from Republican, anti-states’ rights politicians and tyranny. This was the opposite of 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia ballads that sang about defending the capital. *Song of the Irish Brigade* was also critical of ‘the knaves that rest on Columbia’s breast’, who ‘the voice of true men stifle’. Therefore the men of the Confederate ‘Irish Brigade’ would ‘exorcise from the rescued prize’ all those who opposed secession in Washington.<sup>19</sup> The song’s lyrics created a mentality that the Irish were part of ‘true’ American identity as represented by the Confederate States, who in turn were inheritors of the nation’s ideals.

Unsurprisingly, the opposing view of who constituted an American Union national could be heard in Irish wartime ballads produced in the northern states. When *The New York Volunteer* (1862) praised the service of ‘our City Regiments’ in the Union Army, lyrics described how soldiers from the region were quick to answer Lincoln’s call for troops at the start of the conflict. Amongst the city regiments were, of course, the Irish 69<sup>th</sup> New York:

Now, there’s our City Regiments  
 Just see what they have done:  
 The first to offer to the State  
 To go to Washington  
 To protect the Federal Capital.  
 And the Flag they love so dear!

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<sup>19</sup> *Song for the Irish Brigade*, in *Hopkins’ New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book* (New Orleans: John Hopkins, 1861), 14-15.

And they've done their duty nobly,  
Like New York Volunteers.<sup>20</sup>

The noble duty of defending freedom and liberty as New Yorkers and as Americans also extended to lyrical articulations that reinforced the strength of 'the Union'. This was not just a side to fight for in the war. 'The Union' was the very embodiment of the whole United States. Consequently, the vast majority of songs made it clear that the American Union was the country uppermost in the minds of the singing diaspora.

Even lingering anti-Irish nativist views during the war years could not diminish Union praise, at least according to Kathleen O'Neil's *No Irish Need Apply* 1862 version. The final verse described an Irish immigrant girl's delight at being 'in the land of the "Glorious and Free"', again drawing on America as a symbolic country of freedom by comparison to an Ireland then under British rule. The song's singer – in this NINA version Kathleen O'Neil herself – was 'proud...to own it, this country dear to me'. This expressed how America had become the immigrant's own country of associated identity along with its values and principles. As a result of contributing to society and displaying loyalty, America in turn was shedding anti-Irish prejudices. It welcomed the Irish as citizens. Singing to an American audience, O'Neil commented:

I can see by your kind faces, that you will not deny,  
A place in your hearts for Kathleen, where "All Irish may apply".

In return for this mutual affection between Irish immigrants in America and the American nation itself, O'Neil ended her song with a toast that hoped the country and its ideals would last forever:

Then long may the Union flourish, and ever may it be,  
A pattern to the world, and then "Home of Liberty!"<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *The New York Volunteer*, in *The Camp-Fire Songster: A Collection of Popular, Patriotic, National, Pathetic, and Jolly Songs, Suited for the Camp or March, Containing a Number of Songs Never Before Printed* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1862), 23-24.



Similar sentiments could be heard in ballads that sang with Irish-born and descended soldiers' voices as their lyrical focus, with the added emphasis that those fighting would do everything in their military power to preserve the Union. When O'Toole and McFinnigan decide to join the war effort in *O'Toole & McFinnigan On the War* (1863), they exclaimed 'Hurroo! For the Union, me boys'. They also criticised the Confederacy and secession supporters for trying to disrupt states' unity, singing how they wished the 'devil take all who bother it'.<sup>22</sup> The same attitude was presented in Thomas Donnelly's *New York Volunteer* (c.1862) music hall ballad where an Irish soldier explained they volunteered in the Union Army's New York regiments to defend the Union and stop secessionist disturbers of the peace. So great was the Union loyalty and association felt by this fictional Irish soldier, that his ardent fervour would sustain him on the battlefield and even give him the confidence to challenge Confederate President Jefferson Davis:

A gallant hero the Southerners ne'er could frighten,  
And all I want's a belly-full of drinking or of fightin';  
I'd die to guard the Union, as that alone can save us,  
And I'd rather be a blind jackass than that damn fool, Jeff Davis.<sup>23</sup>

Tony Pastor also penned the account of another fictional lyrical Irish soldier singing about Union loyalty in *Young America and Ould Ireland* in 1862. Although part of the song included references to soldiers returning to Ireland to fight for independence, the ballad's ultimate message was that fighting for the American Union was the present and immediate concern. 'Sure, it's the Union I fight for, till Ireland is free', the song's singing soldier expressed. Yet, 'with my knapsack and gun,

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<sup>21</sup> *No Irish Need Apply*, Kathleen O'Neil (Philadelphia: J.H. Johnson, 1862).

<sup>22</sup> *O'Toole & McFinnigan On the War* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

<sup>23</sup> *The New York Volunteer*, Thomas Donnelly (c.1862), quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 453.

wheresoever I be', the soldier stressed throughout the song that the Union came first above other national allegiance. At the end of each verse, Pastor repeated the phrase 'America's Irish Brigade'. This made it clear to listeners that the Union Army's Irish Brigade was an American military entity.<sup>24</sup>

The previous year, a general Union wartime ballad articulated the view of Irish-born and descended soldiers being American soldiers who fought for their own shared stake in the Union's future. *Free and Easy of Our Union!* (1861) explained how 'those sons of Erin...they were for the Union still', loyal to America from the beginning of the war. Thus, the song sang, the whole nation should 'raise your voices all united' in praise of the diaspora's commitment to the Union and willingness to send its sons to the battlefield alongside their American compatriots. 'Let us give three hearty cheers...for our Volunteers' the song concluded.<sup>25</sup> Here, the 'our' encompassed Irish-born and American-born soldiers into one collective national volunteering soldiering body.

All these songs reiterated the sentiment that the Union, and by extension the whole American nation, was fundamental to the diaspora's American experience. They also reveal how the Irish in the country adopted the ideals of the Union and American concepts of nationhood. The 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut's regimental ballad *Save the Constitution* (1862) exhibited this better than comparative Irish Brigade regiment song dedications, as the title drew directly on allegorical images of the United States as tangible entities to defend. 'The Constitution' was both the actual document, in which the concept of states' rights and the argument that the Confederacy was acting in rebellion against the country could be found, and the idea that the Constitution was the united American nation itself. The song called to 'all you gallant volunteers' to

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<sup>24</sup> *Young America and Ould Ireland*, Tony Pastor (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862).

<sup>25</sup> *Free and Easy of Our Union!* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1861).

come and listen to a song about how the Irish 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut volunteers ‘so manfully are fighting’ to uphold ‘the laws and freedom’s cause’ of the American Union, similar to previous contemporary examples about the Irish Brigade.

Where the song differed, however, was that it focused on describing the nation as a ship, extending a metaphor that the United States was encapsulated in the body of the famous *USS Constitution*, one of the American Navy’s leading flagships during the War of 1812, named after the Constitution and still in active service during the Civil War. The 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut, the song explained, were serving the Union ‘to navigate the ship of State, and keep her in full motion, [So] that she may brave the stormy wave and sail on freedom’s ocean’. The song’s chorus reiterated the idea that secession was a storm, which threatened to drown the nation, freedom and democracy. By singing about how the 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut pinned their colours to the nation’s ship mast ‘with bould courage’, these Irish-born and descended soldiers would ‘uphold each noble institution and navigate the ship of state to save the Constitution’.

*Save the Constitution* continued by focusing on how the 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut would ensure the nation stayed on one united course. Again, lyrics stressed the impression that Irish contribution to the war effort would lead to ultimate Union victory and Confederate defeat. One verse in particular drew a contrast between disloyal Confederates and loyal Union countrymen, of which the diaspora in northern states like Connecticut were a part. This verse explained the reason behind the unit’s volunteerism and why it sought to see the country united by criticising the Confederacy’s actions:

When foul rebellious fictions laws this great republic branded,  
As loyal subjects to the cause, the gallant Ninth responded;

And drew the sword to share her woes and keep down vile disunion  
Until they see this country once more a perfect Union.<sup>26</sup>

While these expressions were centred on a regional and local show of Union support from one Irish Connecticut regiment, they echoed the lyrics of another passionate pro-Union ballad, *Hurrah for the Union*. Like *Save the Constitution*, it was also published in 1861. The two examples bear striking similarity in how they articulated a metaphorical concept of the nation bound to the Constitution, with *Hurrah for the Union* singing about how the country was like ‘our ship’s the Constitution’ with ‘good patriots at the helm’. This lyrical comparison was more a reflection of how widespread such views were around society rather than a conscious link between the Irish-focused version and a more general ballad. However, their similarity reinforced how the diaspora shared, adopted and developed the same sentiments about pro-American Union loyalty, ideals and shared nationhood. Indeed, *Hurrah for the Union* contained lyrical sentiments that would not be out of place in Irish wartime ballads and could be sung by all members of Union society:

We fight to save the Union, and God is on our side,  
We fight to put down traitors who the Union would divide,  
And millions rally round the flag, which no power can subdue  
We can die – but we cannot pull down the Red, White and Blue.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, the fact the diaspora shared, and were part of, American Union identity was repeated to the wider public in another general wartime ballad. *We Will Have the Union Still* included lyrics about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York’s fighting service at the First Battle of Bull Run. The song was set to the tune of *Free and Easy Still* and was

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<sup>26</sup> *Save the Constitution*, Timothy B. O’Regan (New York: James Wrigley, 1862). The lyrics about sailing on the *USS Constitution* had another resonance for the 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut as the unit boarded the ship when they headed south to the war after their mobilisation.

<sup>27</sup> *Hurrah for the Union* (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

written in response to *Free and Easy of Our Union!* mentioned previously. Continuing that ballad's theme about Union loyalty and defending the country from further secession, *We Will Have the Union Still* (1861) included the Irish directly as part of a national body of soldiers fighting 'for Uncle Sam' who were adamant they would 'have the Union still'. The Union was forever and could not be defeated. Its lyrics told the public soldiers would be revered because of the sacrifice and service they gave to the national cause. The Confederacy, by comparison, 'shall find we'll die for freedom' and would never yield 'to traitors' in the seceded southern states. This united body of Union Army soldiery, including those of Irish birth and descent, were therefore committed to giving their last full measure of devotion to the country. This is what the home-front would praise as they went to battle:

Then hurrah for those brave fellows,  
Who have gone forth to the wars,  
They'll return soon full of glory  
Waving high our Flag of stars.<sup>28</sup>

Those returning from the war as part of this American army included Irish-born and descended soldiers, marching under a starry flag that also belonged to them. This was a reference to the Star Spangled Banner, the emblem of the Union Army and the United States. It was an emblem that the Irish fighting in the war were especially attached to, alongside and above green banners that recalled their ethnic heritage. The Stars and Stripes were waved metaphorically throughout wartime ballads, acting as the most visible lyrical symbol of the Irish expressing their American identity.

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<sup>28</sup> *We Will Have the Union Still*, Robert Smith (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

## 8.2 Irish Loyalty to the Star Spangled Banner

Printed in *The Continental Songster* in 1863, Kate C.M.'s *the Irish Brigade* bound together all the themes of fighting for freedom, liberty and Union heard in earlier war song examples. Although this particular version of an Irish Brigade-dedicated ballad sang of Irish cultural heritage and nationalist wishes, the majority of lyrics, spread over two pages in the songbook, stressed to wider American society that the Irish in the Union Army would put American allegiance first. To demonstrate this, Irish-born and descended soldiers, and the broader home-front, pledged their allegiance to the Stars and Stripes banner because 'our American flag you love, it is true'. Here, 'our' was simultaneously the nation and the diaspora combined. It again stressed the American focus of the Irish wartime experience. The song began with the pledge:

To the Banner of Freedom, to the red, white and blue,  
The brave Irish soldier must ever prove;  
The Stars and the Stripes no stain can defile,  
While defended by sons of the Emerald Isle.

After singing about Ireland and the green flag of Erin, the conclusion of Kate C.M.'s Irish Brigade song returned to the Star Spangled Banner in the final verses, leaving an impression of an American image in the minds of those reading, performing and listening to *The Continental Songster's* ballads. Lyrics reinforced that the American Union flag was of paramount importance to the diaspora:

Yes, that flag you'll defend, if you're Irish at all,  
Into the hands of the enemy it never must fall,  
But our flag you'll protect, for Liberty's dear,  
Then you're Irish in heart, and a true volunteer.

That final lyric about being a true Irish-hearted volunteer fighting for liberty evoked Irish Volunteer and Irish Patriot heritage of the late 1700s and American

Patriot rhetoric from the Revolution. It also provided one of the best summations of what Union Army service meant to the Irish in the American Civil War. Their ‘true’ volunteerism was an expression of how willing the diaspora was to support the war cause on the battlefield and home-front. Once more, the focus was on the Union and how the American flag embodied the united nation concept. The final few lines of *The Irish Brigade* rallied the diaspora:

Onward to victory – yes, victory or death!  
And the Union forever, with your last dying breath;  
Let the Stars and the Stripes be henceforth your boast,  
‘And the Union forever’, the Irishman’s toast.<sup>29</sup>

*Camp Song of the (Chicago) Irish Brigade* (1861) also galvanised Irish-born and descended soldiers to the fight by singing about the flag as the emblem of Union victory that their war service would bring about:

Bearthe [bear] stars and the stripes o’er you proudly,  
And ne’er let your march be delay’d,  
Till the foe flies in terror before you,  
When charg’d by the Irish Brigade.<sup>30</sup>

By singing constantly about it, the American Union flag acted as a reminder of what the soldiers were fighting for during the conflict. The banner of the nation and each star – including those representing the seceded states that remained on the standard – was representative of the whole country. For example, *Battle of Bull’s Run* painted a lyrical image of:

The Sons of Old Ireland, led forth in their glory...  
Their name will shine brighter in the fame written story,  
With that grand constellation – THE AMERICAN STAR.

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<sup>29</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M., in *The Continental Songster: A Collection of New, Spirited, Patriotic Songs, For the Times* (Philadelphia: A. Winch, 1863), 58-59.

<sup>30</sup> *Camp Song of the (Chicago) Irish Brigade*, P.T. Hade (Chicago: Root & Cady, 1861).

They raised that banner aloft, with its heaven born splendor,  
It was true patriot's hearts could true glory behold.<sup>31</sup>

To emphasise the Irish war service as one spurred on by a sense of true American patriotism, *Battle of Bull's Run's* lyricist Arthur McCann set these lyrics to the tune *American Star* in 1861, creating both a lyrical and musical dual connection to the Star Spangled Banner being upheld by the Irish in the country. As with earlier examples in this study, singing lyrics about national devotion to American musical tunes strengthened the sense of American identity that the conflict brought to the cultural fore.

On occasion, this sentiment was reflected on songsheet publications themselves, such as one copy of Tony Pastor's *Irish Volunteer, No. 3* about Michael Corcoran's American Union loyalty. When H. De Marsan printed the song, the lyrics were illustrated by a design that contained the Stars and Stripes draped around the border. This made the contrast between a ballad about an Irish soldier enfolded in symbolic American illustrations all the greater. While songsheet borders were often printed in stockpiles with ballad lyrics added to the middle of the page at a later point, this particular example is the only songsheet version of an Irish American Civil War song found to date that provided a visual emphasis about Irish connections to America. It complemented the aural message of Pastor's song. Marsan printed other copies of this ballad, as did fellow New York printer James Wrigley, but of the multiple copies that were produced and circulated in 1862, this particular edition intensified Irish cultural adoption of American symbols and identity.

The sense of the Irish adopting an American identity association was also heard in Civil War songs that were not solely related to the dominant Irish Brigade

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<sup>31</sup> *Battle of Bull's Run*, Arthur McCann (1861), quoted by Wright, *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, 457.



narrative. Other examples reiterated the lyrical narrative about how the Stars and Stripes were carried by Irish regiments and inspired Irish-born and descended soldiers. Like Irish Brigade examples, the flag served as the embodiment of the nation. The 9<sup>th</sup> Connecticut's *Save the Constitution* sang proudly about how the regiment carried 'the Stars and Stripes before them'.<sup>32</sup> The 69<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania went to great length to extol the American flag as their unit's standard in one of their regimental ballads. If anything, *Col. Owens' Gallant Irish Volunteers* (1861) was more a song about Star Spangled Banner attachment than praising the unit's service. Its lyrics described how the regiment fought for the American Union. In the song, the country and its flag also belonged to them as Americans. These Union devotional lyrics are worth quoting in full to observe the constant reference to the flag which dominates throughout, bound up in the rhetorical concepts of true fighting loyalty, patriotism and a sense once again that these Pennsylvania Irish were embodying the Union cause as American citizens:

Our country we are bound to save,  
 And keep for ever more  
 And soon the stars and stripes shall wave  
 On all our glorious shore: -  
 The stars and stripes – our own true flag –  
 That we do prize so dear...  
 Now we'll give three cheers for the 69<sup>th</sup>,  
 And for our country too;  
 Likewise unto our Volunteers,  
 For they are all true blue;  
 We are all of a noble band,  
 And are prepared to fight.  
 We'll all stand by the stars and stripes,

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<sup>32</sup> *Save the Constitution*.

The flag we know is right....  
 We'll all stand by our glorious flag,  
 And for our country fight...  
 Like true Irish Volunteers.<sup>33</sup>

The 69<sup>th</sup> New York's Irish-born and descended soldiers also donned the 'true blue' uniforms of the Union Army and sang about their own connections to the Star Spangled Banner in several of their wartime ballads. *The New York Volunteer* sang about the way in which the city's regiments marched with the flag. The song offered cheers 'for the Stars and Stripes hurrah!' which was 'the flag to float o'er us...and to guide us through the fray', a sentiment repeated throughout the song. Lyrics continued to describe how New York's Union regiments, with Irish-born and descended soldiers serving in them, would ensure the Confederacy's defeat, would punish secessionist leaders, and would ensure the American flag would be returned to prominence across the country:

The rebels soon must yield; they cannot stand our banging,  
 And Davis, Wise, and Beauregard will in the air be hanging;  
 The Stars and Stripes will wave aloft, from Oregon to Maine,  
 And while the sun shines o'er us, they'll ne'er come down again.<sup>34</sup>

*The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (1862) reiterated the image of 'the Stars and Stripes, so gloriously, floating o'er them' as they marched 'in defense of the Red, White and Blue'. The Irish 69<sup>th</sup> New York and Irish Brigade pledged themselves to America and sang of the nation as being 'the Shrine of each Irishman's devotion'. This recalled the opinion that United States was a welcoming nation to the diaspora.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Col. Owens' Gallant Irish Volunteers*, Arthur McFadden (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, 1861).

<sup>34</sup> *The New York Volunteer*.

<sup>35</sup> *The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862). The song was set to the air *Red, White and Blue*, reinforcing these lyrical sentiments.

One earlier wartime ballad about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia, *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (1861), also depicted this Irish American Union Army association with the flag as a symbol with which to beat the Confederacy. One verse described a lyrical account of how the unit's Chaplain Father Mooney, a man 'of honor and renown', went with the soldiers to Washington D.C. when Lincoln called for troops at the start of the conflict. On the way when he 'did escort our Heroes unto the battle-ground', Mooney allegedly 'said unto our colonel' Michael Corcoran:

Now, we must fight hand to hand,  
Until we plant the Stars and Stripes way down in Dixie's Land.

Here the flag acted as a physical symbol of reunion. The song stressed that by Irish-born and descended soldiers' actions, such as planting the flag in southern soil, secession would be brought to an end. Lyrics concluded with yet another cheer of 'here's to the Stars and Stripes' to reinforce Irish connections to the American banner they marched under.<sup>36</sup>

This portrayal was reinforced in *Pat's Opinion of the Stars and Stripes* (1862), when the soldier singing the ballad in the first person described how Irish American Union Army soldiers 'fought like the devil, upholding the Stars and Stripes' throughout the nation.<sup>37</sup> So committed were the diaspora's soldiers to keeping the Star Spangled Banner streaming gallantly over the whole United States that when O'Toole and McFinnigan sang about the flag in 1863, they commented that 'the Stars and the Stripes here, at home' in America soon 'to Canada walls we would pin'.<sup>38</sup> This was not a reference to Fenian and Irish nationalist desires to trouble the Canadian border

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<sup>36</sup> *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

<sup>37</sup> *Pat's Opinion of the Stars and Stripes*, John. F. Poole, in *Camp-Fire Songster*, 67-68.

<sup>38</sup> *O'Toole & McFinnigan On the War*.

after the Civil War, but an expression about a desire to see Canada as part of an even greater United States of North America.

Expressions praising the Star Spangled Banner in Irish American Civil War songs generated a sense of shared ownership of the flag by soldiers and the home-front. These were comparable to language used by senior members of the diaspora in their wartime memoirs, which likewise spread the sense of Irish flag association to the nation. Thomas Francis Meagher noted that when the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia's three month initial war service ended in July 1861, its soldiers would remain with Union forces instead of returning to New York before the battle at Bull Run commenced. Meagher stated that 'the 69<sup>th</sup> would not abandon the Stars and Stripes'.<sup>39</sup> Michael Corcoran went even further with his repeated calling upon the image of the banner in his prisoner-of-war memoir. For example, while in Confederate captivity in 1861, he noted in his usual lyrical writing fashion:

Night after night have I lain absorbed in thought upon my miserable cot, and gazed listlessly up into the far-away sky, spangled with its thousands of beaming stars...I have often prayed that, like that distance dome above, the azure field of our own Starry Standard would in the future be studded as thickly with stars, each representing some nation or people of the earth.<sup>40</sup>

Corcoran, as with the Irish wartime song lyrics quoted above, saw the American flag as an emblem of the country, liberty and democracy. In his dreamy state, he evoked future expansion of United States statehood. Corcoran suggested he would aid this national expansion if he survived the war, and he would give his life to ensure Union

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas Francis Meagher, *The Last Days of the 69<sup>th</sup> in Virginia, A Narrative in Three Parts* (New York: Lynch & Cole, 1861), 11.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Corcoran, *The Captivity of General Corcoran: The Only Authentic and Reliable Narrative of the Trials and Sufferings Endured, During his Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Richmond and Other Southern Cities, by Brigadier-General Michael Corcoran, the Hero of Bull Run* (Philadelphia: Barclay & Co, 1864), 28.

prosperity. This personal devotion appeared in Pastor's *Irish Volunteer* 1862 song about the Irish-born commander, where the musical hall performer and songwriter noted: 'Corcoran would die for the Stars and the banner of green'.<sup>41</sup>

As argued previously in this study, Corcoran also turned to song and music to stress his American identity association, especially in connection to the Star Spangled Banner and Francis Scott Key's 1814 anthemic ballad of the same name. Throughout his prisoner-of-war account, several descriptions of concerts and singing Union songs. In one passage, he recounted the times he and his fellow prisoners would sing at length:

How gloriously did we then used to ring out the soul-stirring national anthem, *The Star Spangled Banner!* The air would first be exquisitely rendered by some one of our best vocalists...when the chorus *Oh, long may it wave!* came in, every man of us joined in it with our whole souls.

During these performances, Corcoran would think of his Irish 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia command: 'at these times...I wished to be once more at the head of the gallant old Sixty Ninth, with that dear old standard floating over me'. He then spoke directly to his memoir's readers and the whole American nation to tell them that singing about the flag, and singing *The Star Spangled Banner* in particular, made him feel fervently American and even more devoted to the Union cause. His words echo those of contemporary Irish ballads that shared the same devotional sentiment: 'Oh America! Could you...have looked within my breast, you would have seen my heart beating, with all its Irish fervor, for your welfare and success'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*, No. 3, Tony Pastor (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

<sup>42</sup> Corcoran, *Captivity of General Corcoran*, 30. Corcoran knew Francis Scott Key's *Star Spangled Banner* lyrics well: the quote he used appears in the song's second verse. What is intriguing about his *Star Spangled Banner* adoption, along with its appearance across other Irish and American Civil War ballad and music sources, is that the 1814 composition was not

None of these articulations in wartime memoirs or songs are unique to the Irish experience of the Civil War. Star Spangled Banner devotion was comparable, to some extent, to Bonnie Blue Flag lyrical focus and repetition in the Confederacy. In the additional *Bonnie Blue Flag* lyrics penned in Missouri, the same image of praising a flag standard appeared. It adopted the idea of each star representing a state, commenting of the hope that the Border State would join the Confederacy:

So cheer for our emblem  
Our battle flag I mean  
For the single star of the Bonnie blue flag  
Has grown to be thirteen.<sup>43</sup>

Harry Macarthy actually attempted to reconcile the two Union and Confederate flags at the end of the war in an effort to bring about lyrical banner reunion. His collective ‘patriotic song’ *Our Country’s Flag* (1867) was aimed at the former seceded states but presented a national message of unity under the Stars and Stripes. Lyrics hoped that ‘the Patriot’s love of Country’ would ‘ever join them heart and hand’ as the nation moved forward from the war, putting the United States first. Yet, the Ulster-Scots songwriter could not miss one final opportunity to use his popular *Bonnie Blue Flag* refrains. Several of *Our Country’s Flag* lines came from his early war anthem. Focusing on the Stars and Stripes, Macarthy told Confederate supporters:

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the United States official national anthem (it did not become so until 1931). Although it was heard in society during the American Civil War, especially at military settings such as flag raising/lowering ceremonies, *The Star Spangled Banner* was one of many unofficial nineteenth century national anthems, alongside *Hail, Columbia*, which was also a popular tune for songwriters to use during the conflict. For more *Star Spangled Banner* studies see Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 33-36; William Coleman, “‘The Music of a well tun’d State’: *The Star Spangled Banner* and the Development of a Federalist Music Tradition”, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 35 (2015), 599-629; Michael Corcoran, *For Which It Stands: An Anecdotal Biography of the American Flag* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002).

<sup>43</sup> ‘Additional words to *Bonnie Blue flag*’.

We're still the 'Band of Brothers' that proudly once unful'd  
 The Bonnie Blue Flag whose  
 'Single Star' was sung throughout the world  
 But now that war no longer reigns,  
 Let the cry be heard afar,  
 Hurrah, Hurrah for  
 Our Country's Flag,  
 Yes, each and ev'ry Star!<sup>44</sup>

The Star Spangled Banner itself made regular appearances in Union wartime balladry, with flag songs forming their own genre of lyrical focus. *The Battle Cry of Freedom's* (1862) refrain called the country to 'rally round the flag' and was heard throughout Union culture.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, German Americans combined flag symbology and American ideals rhetoric in their wartime ballads, comparable to Irish examples. One German language song chorus, 'sung by the Blenker Division of the Army of the Potomac' to the tune of *John Brown's Body*, expressed how Union Army German Americans would 'Rally for Lincoln and for Liberty...For the Banner of the Union'. One verse even included an American ballad reference to enhance German American identity association:

We are Germans and we're fighting  
 For the Freedom of the Union...  
 [With] Yankee-Doodle on our lips...  
 For the banner of the Union!<sup>46</sup>

In addition to penning Irish wartime songs, F. Collins wrote the national Union flag ballad *The Glorious Stripes & Stars* in 1861. It stressed the practice of pledging

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<sup>44</sup> *Our Country's Flag*, Harry Macarthy (New Orleans: A.F. Blackmar, 1867).

<sup>45</sup> *The Battle Cry of Freedom*, George F. Root (Chicago: Root & Cady, 1862).

<sup>46</sup> German American version of *John Brown's Body* 'sung by the Blenker Division of the Army of the Potomac', quoted by Steven H. Cornelius, *Music of the Civil War Era* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 29.

allegiance to the banner and that the flag covered all citizens in the country, including those of Irish birth and decent. His lyrics created a message of national unity, in keeping with the way Irish American Civil War song lyrics presented the impression of an American identity:

To the Union Stripes and stars which untie us all in one,  
 A more glorious Flag the sun never shone upon;  
 Then with our blood and money we'll defend it that we can,  
 And drive every rebel traitor out of this once happy land...  
 When unity and peace and good order we obtain...  
 Then no more we will hear of such fighting and such wars,  
 For all the nations round us must respect the Stripes and Stars.<sup>47</sup>

As with references to Irish regiments carrying green banners and depictions of Ireland's cultural symbols, wartime ballads placed great emphasis on the image of flags as visual and lyrical entities that held great meaning to the diaspora and wider society. In the case of the Star Spangled Banner, of course, it was the national American banner. The majority of Union Army regiments marched under its broad stripes and bright stars. Dual flag rhetoric could certainly be heard in Irish songs, as already demonstrated. However, Stars and Stripes references dominate the songs in this study. They are mentioned to a far greater extent than any green regimental banners, which were only carried by some units. The focus on America's flag in song reinforced the fact that the diaspora, in the Union at least, used the symbolic image of America to stress national identity and allegiance to the country.

As Christian Samito argues, the Stars and Stripes, like green Irish flags, were part of a 'symbols and ceremonies' culture. This culture, enhanced by the war, assisted 'the formation of nationalist ideas by transmitting certain messages to an

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<sup>47</sup> *The Glorious Stripes & Stars*, F. Collins (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).



indented audience’ and brought those who shared these ideas ‘together in expressions of public unity’. The nationalist ideas here though were not Irish. They were fundamentally American in nature. ‘Flags and flag presentations’ – and by extension singing about the Star Spangled Banner – were part of what Samito describes as the way in which the Irish in America moulded their ‘service, identity and wartime claims to inclusion’ in a ‘visible public way’.<sup>48</sup> This inclusion, as shown in wartime song lyrics, was bound to a sense of Irish ownership of the Stars and Stripes as their flag as well.

The reason Irish American Civil War songs stressed the idea that the national flag belonged to the diaspora and its soldiers was also provided by lyrics that expressed the blood sacrifice Irish-born and descended men gave, particularly to the American Union cause. Captain W.F. Lyons created a strong lyrical image of the Irish Brigade and Union Army banners passing through war together in one passage of his biography about Thomas Francis Meagher. Describing the image of ‘the Stars and Stripes and the green flag...borne in every fight’, these banners ‘came out riddled with shot; torn with shells; ripped often times into shreds; but they came out unsullied’.<sup>49</sup> Several wartime song lyrics, especially about those relating to the Irish Brigade’s war service, challenged this ‘unsullied’ and unblemished image. *The Irish Brigade* ballad written in January 1862 painted a different scene of battle, where the Stars and the Stripes were stained with Irish blood. When ‘surrounded by carnage and slaughter, at Bull Run, and Lexington too’, Irish-born and descended soldiers had:

Poured out their life-blood like water,  
Upholding the Red, White and Blue.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 104.

<sup>49</sup> W.F. Lyons, *Brigadier General T. F. Meagher; His Political and Military Career, With Selections from his Speeches and Writings* (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson, 1871), 67.

<sup>50</sup> *The Irish Brigade*.

Kate C.M.'s Irish Brigade ballad also picked up the lyrical image of the unit's soldiers bleeding over the national banner in one verse that portrayed when its constituent regimental banners returned to their respective states. Here Irish blood was seen in a positive light as a sign of how far the diaspora's soldiering sons were prepared to go to uphold the Union:

If covered with blood, they are covered with glory;  
For the bright stars of Liberty never can fade,  
While shielded they are by our Irish Brigade.<sup>51</sup>

The notion of Christ-like blood sacrifice pouring out for America was expressed on more than one occasion during the war. Charles Graham Halpine drew on this perception in one of his Miles O'Reilly stories where the Irish-born soldier visited the White House. There, Halpine penned a fictional Thomas Francis Meagher speech which brought together the themes of military service by O'Reilly's fellow soldiers on the battlefields of the war, the American banner and blood sacrifice for the country:

By adoption of the banner, and by the communion of bloody grave-trenches on every field, from Bull Run to where the Chickamauga rolls down its waters of death, the race that were heretofore only exiles, receiving generous hospitality in the land, are now proud peers of the proudest and brave brothers of the best.<sup>52</sup>

Halpine returned to the image of Irish blood sacrifice for the American nation after the war in one of his final cultural productions before his death. Printed in *The New*

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<sup>51</sup> *The Irish Brigade*, Kate C.M.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Graham Halpine, *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly [Pseud.], 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New York Volunteers, with Comic Illustrations by Mullen, from the Authentic Records of the 'New York Herald'* (New York: Carleton, 1864), 159-160.

*York Herald* in November 1867, he penned a song that described how all soldiers, including his fellow Irishmen, fought and bled for the Star Spangled Banner:

Oh, as citizens – Americans –  
 We gloried in the name,  
 And on many a field our blood we shed  
 To guard your flag of fame.<sup>53</sup>

Halpine and other wartime lyricists also drew on stories of injured and dying soldiers on the battlefields. Irish American Civil War accounts all contain stories of heroic sacrifice and bleeding wounds in the midst of fighting, but one tale in particular gained national attention in 1862. At the Battle of Fredericksburg, Irish-born Thomas Plunkett, serving in the 21<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts, picked up the regimental banner, which to all intents and purposes looked like the Stars and Stripes. During the Union Army's ill-fated charge upon Marye's Heights – the same engagement that caused such heavy Irish Brigade losses and generated lyrical outpourings like Hugh F. McDermott's *Irish Brigade* discussed earlier in this study – Plunkett received multiple injuries. Carrying the colour made him a Confederate target. When the banner underwent restoration in the twentieth century, it was noted that in the flag's 'center, large irregular brown stains...from a liquid' were present.<sup>54</sup> This was Plunkett's Irish blood, still discolouring the banner. He lost both arms at Fredericksburg in his efforts to keep the standard flying and was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions. It was noted when he was carried from the field that the flag was 'soaked...[in] the Irishman's "life blood"'. Clara Barton, the nurse who founded the American Red

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<sup>53</sup> Charles Graham Halpine, quoted by Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 206.

<sup>54</sup> Flag No. F100 Case D, Massachusetts Volunteer 21<sup>st</sup> Regiment Infantry banner in *Massachusetts State House Flag Project Examination Report* (Boston, 1984), Burrill File, State Library of Massachusetts Special Collections.

Cross and treated Plunkett, later ‘observed that his blood “literally obliterated the stripes”’.<sup>55</sup>

Plunkett’s story added weight and poignancy to Irish American Civil War lyrics that depicted soldiers’ sacrifice staining the Stars and Stripes as Irish blood mingled with American symbolic imagery. *To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>* (1861) sang about why this Irish blood in particular mattered to the American nation, calling on the rhetoric of patriotism other contemporary ballads focused upon:

Those noble sons of Erin, who to this country came,  
The people call them Irish, which sure is no mean name;  
For, patriotic blood does run, quite richly, through their veins,  
Unwilling that this Country’s Flag should suffer rebel stains.<sup>56</sup>

This verse clearly states that once more Irish-born and descended soldiers were showing true patriotism and loyalty to the American nation. Their blood honoured the American flag. Confederate ‘rebel stains’ by comparison were not pure and should not taint the Stars and Stripes because their secession had removed any sense of their American patriotism. Another song about the 69<sup>th</sup> New York reiterated this message that Irish war service, sacrifice and defence for the Stars and Stripes was more worthy and American than Confederate actions. One verse explained the moment when the diaspora answered the Union’s call to arms in the wake of secession:

When traitors rise in might and power  
To humble its proud name,  
Rise, one and all, as Erin’s sons,  
Protect its noble fame;  
Proclaim abroad to all the world  
THAT FLAG THEY’LL NE’ER DESTROY  
Swear to defend the Stars and Stripes.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Damian Shiels, *The Irish in the American Civil War* (Dublin: The History Press, 2013), 90.

<sup>56</sup> *To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>!* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

The 69<sup>th</sup> New York, the Irish Brigade, and all Irish-born and descended soldiers fighting in the Union Army defended the Stars and Stripes, upholding the banner and all the ideas of the American nation the flag encapsulated. Irish wartime song references to the national banner reveal that these soldiers bled Irish green, Confederate grey and Union – and ultimately by extension American – red, white and blue in equal measure. Yet, the latter ran through lyrical articulations of Irish love and devotion to the starry standard of the United States of America stronger than the rest. Irish American Civil War ballads, and the examples of those fighting in the conflict who articulated their experience of the war in accounts, provide an explanation for why America and American identity came to the fore frequently in cultural articulations. The nation had become more than just a symbolic entity of grand inspirational ideals to the diaspora. By the Civil War era, it had also become *home*. It was America, not Ireland, which was the home nation to defend.

### 8.3 The Irish American Home

One fundamental aspect missing in Irish American historiography is the serious consideration that by the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the diaspora was well established in the United States, and that many immigrants had been in the country for several years, decades and generations. Even the Famine migrants of the 1840s and 1850s had been resident for at least a decade before Fort Sumter was fired upon. Several prominent diaspora leaders established families and livelihoods for years before 1861. Michael Corcoran had been in America for over twelve years before the conflict began, while Thomas Francis Meagher had likewise been in the country for almost a decade before. Then there were the younger, first generation soldiers who had been born in Ireland by grown up in America, like Daniel Crowley and Patrick

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<sup>57</sup> *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1862).

Kelly mentioned in this study. Serving alongside them were those like Peter Welsh of second and subsequent generation extraction born in North America. While they all retained a sense of Irish cultural heritage, they also expressed American identity because they had come to share an inherent association with the nation by the 1860s. In addition, notable diaspora figures like James A. Mulligan, leader of his own band of Irish regiments, and army chaplains like William Corby, were second generation themselves though were still considered to be Irish. Mulligan was born in New York State before residing in Chicago, while Corby stated very clearly in his post-war memoir that he was not Irish: 'I write not as a foreigner but as a native-born American citizen' who discussed the Irish experience in his country.<sup>58</sup>

Whilst national identity is personal and fluid, especially amongst immigrants, there has been too much of a sense in scholarship that the Irish fighting and living through the American Civil War used the conflict to express various aspects of their 'dual' Irish identity and a developing American identity. This has led a confused impression of the diaspora being Irish and being American, simultaneously finding ways to articulate their Irishness and their Americanness alongside their United States patriotism. Lawrence J. McCaffrey argued that the war 'gave Irish American an opportunity to prove their patriotism' by fighting and supporting Union (and Confederate) causes.<sup>59</sup> By extension, the war also gave an opportunity to express patriotism through cultural outputs, like ballads. Bernard Aspinwall, however, argues that even before the war 'American patriotism was firmly established among Irish

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<sup>58</sup> William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years Chaplain in the Famous Irish Brigade* (Chicago: La Monte, 1893), 66.

<sup>59</sup> Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America* (Indiana University Press, 1976), 95.

Americans'.<sup>60</sup> These two opinions create too much of a binary position along a spectrum of 'when did the Irish become American?'

More recently, Samito's *Becoming American Under Fire* raised complex challenges to this sense of national identity articulation, arguing that 'some Irish Americans gained a greater appreciation for their American identity'. Thus the Irish in the United States 'increasingly felt they could be considered Americans even when they did not completely abandon their ethnicity'. It was, according to Samito, a long process of identity evolution in a 'climate' where the diaspora 'increasingly recognised the American component of their identity and allegiance'.<sup>61</sup> Yet, Ural has argued the opposite, stating that the diaspora 'would view the war through Irish lenses', not American ones.<sup>62</sup> In terms of the contemporary cultural articulation of Irish identity transition in America and this historiographical debate, wartime ballads support Samito's argument more with the added caveat that the Irish had become American in their identity focus and national sympathies. Using lyrics as evidence highlights the fact that the Irish in America, in both the Union and Confederacy, viewed the war through American lenses as they sung and fought in their new home nation.

Songs provide the clearest popular articulations of America being an Irish home nation. The reason they fought for the country, adopted its ideals, upheld and bled for the flag was because they were the manifestations of home. It was home that was ultimately being fought for and sung about during the conflict. Home defence was paramount. As Peter Welsh told his brother-in-law in 1864:

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<sup>60</sup> Bernard Aspinwall, "Irish Americans and American Nationality, 1848-66", in *Contemporary Irish Studies*, eds. Tom Gallagher and James O'Connell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 112.

<sup>61</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 112; 133.

<sup>62</sup> Susannah J. Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 41.

It is the right and duty of citizens and those who have lived in this country long enough to become citizens to fight for the maintenance of law and order and nationality.<sup>63</sup>

What Welsh meant was that as the United States had become an established home for the diaspora, it was thus only right that its members took up arms as American citizens and defend its unity. Although Welsh discussed Union war service, the same argument could be applied to those upholding the Confederate cause.

Irish American Civil War songs articulated the expression of American home identity as part of their overall message of Irish loyalty to the nation on the battlefield and in the home-front. One lyric in *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*, sung from the perspective of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's soldiers marching off to war, gave the cry: 'Then forward! For our homes and altars, all we hold most dear' to rally those to the fight.<sup>64</sup> Although singing specifically about one regiment, this sentiment could be expressed by any soldier in either army, Union, Confederate, Irish or otherwise. They were marching forward to fight for and defend what they all held closest to them. Their homes and families mattered above all else. In wartime ballads, these families resided in fundamentally American homes. This sentiment could be heard in *Off for a Soldier* (c.1863), a Union song about a fictional soldier Micky O'Flaherty going to 'march with the boys 'till rebellion is done'. In a mock-Irish brogue, Micky described to his wife Peggy his reason for heading to war. Using familiar concepts of American national rhetoric to explain his actions:

The stars and the stripes shall float over my head,  
And Peggy, you know I must help save the counthry  
That affords me protection and gives me my bread.

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<sup>63</sup> Peter Welsh to Francis Prendergast, 25 April 1864, *Irish Green and Union Blue*, 155.

<sup>64</sup> *War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment*.



By going to war and safeguarding the United States as an all-protecting nation of liberty welcoming migrant populations, Micky would ‘return a hero to be pointed at as America’s pride’. Lyrics described how Micky’s defence of his family on the battlefield was more important than defending them in the home-front because the severity of American unity was at stake. The song stressed this fictional Irish soldier would not return with his family until the war was over:

Niver ‘till traitors  
Have fired their last gun at the flag of the free...  
The drums then came beating, the colors were flying,  
A kiss for his wife and his children three  
And Mickey O’Flaherty marched with the soldiers  
To fight for the flag of the faithful and free.<sup>65</sup>

Once again, *Off for a Soldier* sang of an Irish soldier, albeit a fictional one, who conflated the image of home in America with the symbol of the Star Spangled Banner. One real Irish-born soldier likewise expressed these sentiments in extremely passionate language in both the ballads written about him and his own wartime writings. Michael Corcoran used the rhetoric of the United States as being his home nation at length throughout his prisoner-of-war memoir, comparable to the extent he mentioned the Star Spangled Banner. Corcoran described how ‘my heart constantly yearned for home’ while he was imprisoned. When he was moved to various prison holdings in the southern states, ‘the greater the distance from the latter [ie. his home state] became, the stronger grew the tie that still held me to it’.<sup>66</sup> Home was thus foremost in Corcoran’s mind, but crucially he meant home as in New York City, not Ireland.

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<sup>65</sup> *Off for a Soldier*, S. Leonce (c.1863).

<sup>66</sup> Corcoran, *Captivity of General Corcoran*, 45.

On occasion, Corcoran combined home and the flag together, equating their association. He did this most notably in the final passages of his memoir when he wrote about returning to New York City after being released from Confederate captivity. Describing the boat journey reaching its final destination, he saw ‘Home, with its loved ones and friends’ spring up before his ‘eyes like an enchanting vision’. As he reached New York, Corcoran continued in the same vein:

Eagerly, very eagerly, did I strain my eyes down the river to catch the first glimpse of the Starry Flag...In due time I saw it, and, as my eyes fell upon its bright stars and stripes, my soul thrilled to its center, and my Irish heart welled up with emotion.

His thirteen-months of prison captivity notwithstanding, Corcoran informed his American public readership at the conclusion of his account that he had once ‘again taken up the sword’ for the Union cause, now serving at the head of his own legion named after him. Like Micky O’Flaherty had sung, Corcoran also stressed he would continue to fight for his home country until secession ended. He would:

Never sheathe [his sword] until victory perches upon the national banner of America, or Michael Corcoran is numbered among those who did not return home from the battle-field.<sup>67</sup>

This was in keeping with his Corcoran’s belief, expressed earlier in the memoir, that soldiers fighting for the Union should defend the country to the very end. For Corcoran, giving his life for his American home was a sentiment he expressed wholeheartedly and without question.

This expression of home devotion ties into Corcoran’s overall image as a truly loyal, gallant Irish-born American heroic patriot serving the Union Army, an impression which wartime songs emphasised all the more. Certainly, his prisoner-of-

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 100.

war memoir was written with a wider readership in mind, showing his loyalty to the American public beyond the diaspora. Yet, Corcoran's devotion to the nation and commitment to the military fight against the Confederacy were reoccurring sentiments in Irish American Civil War ballads. Corcoran's views were more than just expressions for show. His own private letters and the intimate way song lyrics portrayed his character demonstrated his inherent sense of Americanness, developed over a decade of living in New York City before the start of the conflict. *Corcoran's Ball!* likewise depicted Corcoran as the ultimate loyal American officer. Aimed at the whole nation, one verse of the song exclaimed:

You've all heard of the Great Michael Corcoran,  
That true Son of Erin, so brave in the strife;  
The National cause he was ever a worker in,  
And the Union to him was more precious than life.  
When dastard Secession raised its dark crest upon  
This Glorious Country, he answered her call;  
And though, at the moment, he sorely was press'd upon  
He went off, right gladly, to open the ball.<sup>68</sup>

*Corcoran's Irish Legion* also expressed the same sense that Corcoran was fighting to defend 'the National cause' of American Union reconciliation and peaceful future of a united country. Both this ballad and *Corcoran's Ball!* were written in 1863, around the time Corcoran was penning his memoir, and both celebrated his return to army service after his imprisonment. The former, *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, returned to the wider context of the conflict to explain why the one-time commander of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York led his soldiers to the war effort in 1861. Drawing on American ideals and the Star Spangled Banner, lyrics expressed the dominant message that

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<sup>68</sup> *Corcoran's Ball!* John Mahon (New York: H. De Marsan, 1863).

Corcoran did this because secession was a treacherous act. The whole United States had to be defended, with a swift response from the diaspora's soldiers:

When Treason's black Flag was raised in the land  
 By a ruthless foe that did hate it,  
 And the Capitol threatened by a dastardly band,  
 Who would have Washington's tomb desecrated,  
 The President called; and we rushed hand in hand  
 The bonds of Rebellion to sever,  
 And to fight for our home our dear adopted land,  
 And to crush out the traitors forever and ever.<sup>69</sup>

The continual focus and return to Corcoran's example raises the question of whether the County Sligo native turned ardent American citizen was atypical of wider Irish fighting service and wartime experiences. Certainly Corcoran himself was more vocal and lyrical in his expressions of what the American Union meant to him than most, but his sentiments could be heard in the accounts of other Irish-born and descended serving soldiers and in other outputs from the home-front. In addition, the description of Corcoran going to fight in *Corcoran's Irish Legion* applied not just to the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia who went with him in 1861, but all those of Irish descent who fought across the Union. If the sentiments were reversed to one that extolled Confederate defence, then these lyrical views could extend to all on both sides of the divided nation. Love of country and nationality is a malleable construct. Corcoran provided the diaspora with a solid example and impression that could be used to inspire everyone. He may have been one man, but his wartime experience and sentiments, especially in his expressions of devotion to the United States, could apply to anyone. Ballads helped stress this universal association. Corcoran had assimilated into American identity, society and alliance by the Civil War. This was only enhanced

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<sup>69</sup> *Corcoran's Irish Legion*, Eugene T. Johnston (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

by his service in the conflict. Lyrics reinforced and disseminated his transnational transition.

In addition, *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>*, written over two years before Corcoran's prisoner-of-war memoir appeared, uttered the same feeling of an Irish-born American citizen inspired by the perception of home. Singing directly about the Irish-born and descended men of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia marching to war, and indirectly about any New York volunteer and Union Army enlistee, lyrics sang from a generic soldier's perspective about the farewell given as the conflict called America's sons to service:

Farewell unto New York, shall I never see it more?  
It fills my heart with pity, to leave its sylvan shore.<sup>70</sup>

The sylvan home-front shore was fought for, defended and protected on the Civil War's battlefields by Ireland's sons, who served to ensure its future could be maintained and the home remained central to the diaspora's experience of American life.

This view of the United States as home was already central to Irish American cultural productions and reinforced by the conflict itself, a sentiment that could be heard in *The Return of Pat Malloy* (c.1865). This traditional ballad, written during the Civil War era, was a response to the pre-war song *Pat Malloy* (c.1860). The latter original example sang of an Irish-born immigrant 'Pat', who left Ireland for England before travelling to the United States. Verses expressed how his mother missed Pat terribly.<sup>71</sup> In *The Return of Pat Malloy*, the eponymous Irish migrant was settled with his family in America, including his mother who also migrated. The final verse painted an idyllic home scene as the diaspora settled in postbellum American society.

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<sup>70</sup> *Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>*.

<sup>71</sup> *Pat Malloy* (Boston: Horace Partridge, c.1860).

Lyrics described Pat's 'mother's in her rocking-chair, her children pay the rent'. She was living 'in New York, relieved from work, each happy hour spent...free from every toil her care her heart is light and free'. This was the peaceful home life hundreds of thousands of Erin's sons and daughters, like Pat Malloy, had fought for and upheld during the American Civil War. This American-produced Irish traditional ballad was 'composed for, and sung with unbounded applause by William H. Lindsay' on the musical hall stages of 1860s, disseminating the message that the Irish were effectively living peaceful lives in the country they had fought to defend and reunite.

Placed in an American home setting, the song also reinforced the transmission of Irish cultural heritage within American constructs. The last lyrics painted the image of Pat Malloy's Irish-born mother settled across the Atlantic with her American-born grandchildren in a new family home telling tales of Irish traditions. This included songs being sung to new generations of the diaspora who were Americans by birth and association in the postbellum era:

She sings a good old Irish song, with 'young Pat' on her knee...

She sings, and talks, and plays with him, both morning, noon and night.<sup>72</sup>

Yet, for all Pat Malloy's mother singing Irish songs to her grandchild, by the end of the Civil War most of the Irish ballads written in the United States were about Irish service in the conflict and were extremely American in their focus. Civil War songs by and about the Irish who fought in the war pulled together all the strands of American loyalty, identity and home nation association that, while including songs that sang of traditional Irish heritage, returned continually to rhetoric of innate kinship

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<sup>72</sup> *The Return of Pat Malloy* (Boston: Horace Partridge, c.1865).

with the United States through expressions of sharing American ideals and adopting national symbols.

The constant collective terminology heard in writings and lyrics – when ‘our’ meant the Irish in America expressing themselves as Americans – shows how by the 1860s an inherent sense of Americanness pervaded the diaspora’s understanding of their place in the United States. They were Americans. The Civil War gave them cause and opportunities to demonstrate this through song, fighting service and support for the united home nation’s future. Singing about America, its ideals and the Star Spangled Banner as entities that belonged to the diaspora, and sharing in the collective citizen body contributing to the war effort, reveal how Irish identity had become American very quickly in the mid-nineteenth century. The Civil War provided the platform on which this transnational identity transition could be observed across society.

## Chapter 9

### **Conclusion: ‘Strike in Their Might for the Banner of Stars’**

#### **Epilogue**

The amalgamation of national loyalty, symbolic adoption, home country association and identity articulation by the Irish in the American Civil War era was brought together in Thomas Kean’s 1861 *The Harp of Old Erin and Banner of Stars*. It bound all the themes and sentiments heard in this study about how the Irish and Americans were one shared entity who ultimately put America first. In the rhetorical construct of Irish America, this song sang of how the Irish in the United States placed emphasis on the American side of their dual identity. The overall strength of American national association was reinforced by the fact that the country represented home. Lyrics emphasised the reason the diaspora’s Irish-born and descended sons joined the war effort and answered the call to defend the unity of the United States. America was their country, as embodied by their adoption and ownership of the American flag. Their war service would generate home-front support that likewise put loyalty to the American Union above all.

Kean’s song summarised every sentiment heard throughout Irish American Civil War balladry. It sang of Irish lyrical thoughts embedded with American expressions and demonstrated a paramount sense of Americanness coming to the fore as the Irish put their Civil War experiences into song:

I swear...[by] the vows we have pledged to this home of the free,  
 As we’d sheathe our swords in the foes of dear Ireland,  
 We will use them as freely ‘gainst traitors to thee...  
 Strike in their might for the Banner of Stars.  
 No, no, with their life blood they’ll guard the rich treasure;  
 See how they respond to the call, ‘shoulder arms’...



They'll conquer though traitors their cannon may rattle,  
And bring back triumphant the Banner of Stars.<sup>1</sup>

These same sentiments would appear again in the early twentieth century. As the United States mobilised its countrymen in 1917, lyricist Edward Harry Kelly penned a song that informed the nation how its Irish descent population would once again don American army uniform and join the war effort on the fields of Flanders and France.

*America, Ireland Loves You* stressed Irish commitment to this new military cause, reiterating ballad sentiments written over fifty years before during the American Civil War. Soldiers would again march under the Stars and Stripes:

America, Ireland loves you,  
She's with you in this hour of trial...  
Ev'ry son of Old Erin in allegiance is swearin'  
They're rarin' to fight for the Red, White and Blue.<sup>2</sup>

This example was one of several ballads written from the perspective of Irish communities in the United States during the First World War. They reinforced the fact that the Irish, as Americans, were just as ready to fight for liberty and democracy at the turn of the twentieth century as they had been at Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville and every other engagement of the Civil War. Indeed, Irish American First World War songs expressed similar sentiments heard throughout the rest of this study. They also demonstrated the predominant place Irish war service ballads had in American musical culture into the 1900s.

Even before the outbreak of conflict in Europe, lyricists continued to stress the diaspora's eagerness to defend their United States home nation. In 1913, yet another

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<sup>1</sup> *The Harp of Old Erin and Banner of Stars*, Thomas Kean (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

<sup>2</sup> *America, Ireland Loves You*, Edward Harry Kelly (Kansas City: Edward Harry Kelly Publishing Co., 1917).

Irish Volunteer rhetoric ballad appeared, entitled *Marching Song of the Irish Volunteers*. It sung about Irish foreign military service in the Spanish-American War and American Indian Wars. Lyrics also described how Irish-born and descended men and women's support helped the American Union reunite after Confederate secession:

The Irish race, united, new,  
The youngest nation of the earth...  
Freedom's flag unstained we lift.<sup>3</sup>

After the United States joined the world war effort four years later, songwriter and publisher Michael J. Fitzpatrick wrote a new *Irish Volunteer*-entitled song. In addition to continuing the popular Irish volunteer ballad theme, it articulated long-standing devotion to the Star Spangled Banner as the embodiment of the United States, expressing a similar sentiment to that heard in *America, Ireland Loves You* and throughout the American Civil War.<sup>4</sup>

While there remained a sense of Irish cultural heritage, these song examples from the early 1900s continued to demonstrate how American identity was engrained in the diaspora's mindset. This sentiment had been cemented in Irish American Civil War ballads. At the end of the conflict in 1865, Charles Graham Halpine wrote *The Review: A Picture of Our Veterans* dedicated to all those who fought. Halpine's lyrics described soldiers disbanding, mourning the loss of the nation's sons on both Union and Confederate sides, and waving battle emblems in the direction of the country's reconciled future. Commenting that the ballad was 'already...on the lips and in the hearts of many of our veterans', Halpine exclaimed:

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<sup>3</sup> *Marching Song of the Irish Volunteers*, Thomas MacDonagh, in *The Irish Review*, 3:34 (Dublin, 1913), 500-502.

<sup>4</sup> *Irish Volunteers*, Michael J. Fitzpatrick (New York: Fitzpatrick Bros., 1917).

Oh, our comrades! Gone before us  
 In the last review to pass,  
 Never more to earthly chieftain  
 Dipping colors as you pass...  
 To the souls of all our perished  
 We, who still saluting, pass,  
 Dip the flag and trail the sabre  
 As with wasted ranks we pass.<sup>5</sup>

Just as his Miles O'Reilly songs and fictional stories spread messages of Irish loyalty to the American Union cause, Halpine used his lyrical pen to create ballads such as *The Review* that established the idea of one united American martial experience. Sectional divisions were forgotten; sentiments about soldiers, grief and thanks for battlefield sacrifice became the focus. The final verse of Halpine's *Song of the Soldiers* was 'frequently recited at Grand Army of the Republic gatherings into the late 1880s', repeating the sentiment that veterans on both sides were 'brothers of one church'.<sup>6</sup> This American unity had nothing to do with transnational associations. It was about a fundamental sense of Americanness. Halpine even used O'Reilly to emphasise this message in one of his character's final appearances. In November 1867, *The New York Herald* published a poem that described O'Reilly as a 'gallant soldier, genuine Irishman, and true America'. Halpine's phrase summarised more than just O'Reilly's identity. Effectively, he described Irish-born and descended residents in the United States:

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<sup>5</sup> *The Review: A Picture of Our Veterans*, Charles Graham Halpine, in *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly [Pseud.], 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New York Volunteers, with Comic Illustrations by Mullen, from the Authentic Records of the 'New York Herald'* (New York: Carleton, 1864), 218-219. For analysis of Union Army veteran sentiments see Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> *Song of the Soldiers*, Charles Graham Halpine, quoted by Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 113.

We are citizens twice over,  
By the law and by the sword,  
By adoption and by service.<sup>7</sup>

Although these lyrics can be read as articulating a sense of the Irish ‘becoming’ American through their war experience, as Christian Samito argues, they were actually more reflective of examples that stressed the Irish had *become* American by the war, as argued throughout this study. It was an expression heard in songs from the Civil War’s earliest days. In 1861, the last verse of *To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>!* combined sentiments about fighting and dying for the home nation with a spiritual idea that dead soldiers would reunite in the choir invisible to sing about American ideals:

I think those noble soldiers deserve a heavenly sphere,  
With Abraham and Jacob they surely will appear;  
And when the Angel Army shall gather in one throng,  
The...boys will sing the freedom song.<sup>8</sup>

Another New York 69<sup>th</sup> ballad sang of the same sentiment in the succinct lyric ‘Ireland is proud, and America is grateful’ for the service and sacrifice made by Irish-born and descended soldiers and their families.<sup>9</sup> Earning a place in American wartime cultural memory was just reward for their military commitment to reuniting the nation once again.

Had Halpine lived longer, he would likely have become one of the leading voices of postbellum Irish America, articulating the diaspora’s identity as Americans through more writings, poems and songs, and using war service to stress how loyal the Irish were to the country they called home. Yet, Halpine died before he could

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Graham Halpine, *The New York Herald* (New York), 20 November 1867, quoted by Samito, *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>8</sup> *To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup>!* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

<sup>9</sup> *Long Live the Sixty-Ninth*, Mr. Mullaly (New York: James Wrigley, 1861).

fulfil more promise in August 1868. The collective demise of prominent members of the Irish community during the war and within a decade of the conflict's end – including Corcoran, Meagher, Halpine, Archbishop John Hughes, James A. Mulligan and several Irish Brigade commanders – silenced this strain of American Irish articulation. Certainly, something of their overall American identity ethos lived on in later nineteenth century balladry when tied to broader values the country upheld. For instance in 1868, the song *America to Ireland* suggested that the Irish fighting in the United States Army and living in the reconstructed nation were carrying on the legacy of past Irish American Civil War heroes:

The leaves of the Shamrock are spreading a-far,  
And we honor the heroes who bare them,  
Where Sheridan, Corcoran, Mulligan, Meagher,  
Like pillars of fire went before them.<sup>10</sup>

However, these individuals slowly passed out of American cultural memory and later historical studies of the Irish in the Civil War era. Michael Corcoran, the man with 'the soul of a hero...easily seen' throughout wartime balladry, all but disappeared from twentieth and twenty-first century accounts and historiography.<sup>11</sup> This is despite the fact that for three years of the conflict, his contribution to the war effort, his example, and his articulations of American loyalty had an enormous impact on Irish lyrical expressions about their experiences in the divided warring nation. The last notable lament to this exemplar Irish American Union Army general appeared not long after his funeral and eulogy performances in January 1864. A ballad verse published in *The Irish-American* newspaper mourned his death and exalted his gallant character:

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<sup>10</sup> *America to Ireland*, James G. Clark (1868).

<sup>11</sup> *The Irish Volunteer*, No. 3, Tony Pastor (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).

With sorrowing hearts we'll plant it  
 Above our hero's tomb;  
 And where fond, bright hopes lie,  
 With manhood's early bloom;  
 While Erin with her tear and smile,  
 Unrolls her scroll of fame,  
 And writes, in sunlight pencilling,  
 Beloved Corcoran's name.<sup>12</sup>

Corcoran's omission in most subsequent histories and studies of the Irish American Civil War experience is surprising given his predominance amongst wartime society. His cultural influence alone deserves greater attention. Compared to the long-lasting focus on Thomas Francis Meagher, Corcoran is in need of a detailed biographical study, particularly on the way he absorbed America and all it stood for as part of his own identity. The fact he was sung about the most, and employed by song writers as the symbolic figure for the diaspora to aspire to, raises questions about Meagher's own standing in Irish American studies by comparison. Corcoran was just as, if not more, important. Indeed, in one postbellum fictional wartime story, Corcoran's presence in Union Army ranks had 'an almost magical effect on' the soldiers serving under him.<sup>13</sup> It was a fitting description for the cultural and lyrical hagiography that surrounded the general in the 1860s. Nonetheless, the magic of Corcoran's cultural appeal faded.

By contrast, Thomas Francis Meagher continues to appear in historical studies and biographies, though his presence in wartime singing culture and ballads has been largely ignored. The focus has been on his public speeches and journalism in the

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<sup>12</sup> *Written on Hearing the Death of General Corcoran*, 'Mary', *The Irish-American* (New York), 30 January 1864.

<sup>13</sup> Bernard Wayde, *Fighting Pat; Or, The Boys of the Irish Brigade*, in *The War Library: Original Stories of Adventure in the War of the Union* (New York: Novelist Publishing Co., 23 December 1882), 2.

United States, not in how society wrote and sung about him.<sup>14</sup> The former Young Ireland nationalist returned to some level of prominence across the Atlantic in Ireland amongst twentieth century republican circles during the era of revolution, independence and civil war, although his American past was rarely alluded to. In 1916, Sinn Féin founder Arthur Griffith compiled *Meagher of the Sword*. The book focused on Meagher's Young Ireland political speeches up to the time of his sentencing to Van Diemen's Land in 1848. His life and fighting service across the Atlantic did not fit the Irish Rising's rhetorical and historical messages of nationalism that Griffith created.<sup>15</sup>

In the United States, memory of Meagher remained fairly muted and local. His short governorship is remembered with his statue in Helena, Montana; a frieze depicts him saluting General Fitz John Porter at the Battle of Malvern Hill on a monument in New Hampshire, and recently a bust has been placed next to his wife Elizabeth's grave in New York.<sup>16</sup> Meagher is also prominent on the Irish Brigade monument at Antietam positioned at the end of the Sunken Road/Bloody Lane where many Irish-born and descended soldiers fell in September 1862. This modern memorial continues the conflation heard in wartime song lyrics about Corcoran's 69<sup>th</sup> New York and Meagher's Irish Brigade. The soldiers on the front of the stone are 69<sup>th</sup> New Yorkers while Meagher's face graces the reverse side, confusing the two entities while reinforcing the 69<sup>th</sup> New York's predominance within the Brigade's history.

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<sup>14</sup> See the most recent work on Meagher's American life by Timothy Egan, *The Immortal Irishman: The Irish Revolutionary Who Became an American Hero* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016). Egan briefly mentions *The Escape of Meagher* but there is no discussion of wartime songs about the general in this biographical study, 138.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Griffith, ed., *Meagher of the Sword: Speeches of Thomas Francis Meagher in Ireland, 1846-1848* (Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son, 1916).

<sup>16</sup> Wayne Soini, *Porter's Secret: Fitz John Porter's Monument Decoded* (Portsmouth: Jetty House, 2011), 40.

These Irish American Civil War monuments are modern constructs, but on 2 July 1888 one of the first memorials appeared to Irish-born and descended soldiers on ‘the field that drank in the blood of so many of our dead companions’.<sup>17</sup> At the Battle of Gettysburg’s twenty-fifth anniversary, the Irish Brigade were remembered at a service presided over by their last commander General Robert Nugent and attended by surviving members of the unit, including chaplain William Corby who reported details of the event in his memoir. Attendees gathered for ‘the dedication of the monument erected to the memory of the Irish Brigade, a beautiful structure’. Its unveiling ceremony focused on the same themes heard in songs a quarter of a century earlier about how the Irish Brigade ‘fought on many well-stricken fields for the preservation of the Union and in the Cause of Universal Liberty’.<sup>18</sup>

Corby’s account highlighted how songs were still being sung in the Irish Brigade’s honour after the war at commemorative events. During the Gettysburg 1888 anniversary, several ballad and poetry performances repeated past sentiments heard in wartime iterations. One example was William Geoghegan’s *The Irish Brigade at Gettysburg*. It described Irish and American flags waving over Irish-born and descended soldiers at the 1863 battle:

Two banners o’er them flew –  
The emblem of the land they left  
And the land they came unto.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years Chaplain in the Famous Irish Brigade* (Chicago: La Monte, 1893), 187. For studies on American Civil War memory, commemoration and anniversaries see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002); Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, 193-194.

<sup>19</sup> *The Irish Brigade at Gettysburg*, William Geoghegan, quoted by Corby, *Ibid.*, 199.



*In Memory of the Fallen Dead of the Irish Brigade* by William Collins was also recited, which again emphasised the diaspora's allegiance to the Star Spangled Banner. Like countless Civil War song examples, it once again stressed the view that the Union Army's Irish Brigade and its soldiers were a crucial part of the fighting American spirit that upheld ideals, gained overall victory and reunited the United States:

Where'er that blue, by valor nerved, in serried ranks was seen  
 There flashed between it and the foe the daring Irish Green!  
 And never yet, on any land, rushed forth to Freedom's aid  
 A braver or more dauntless band than Ireland's brave Brigade...  
 [They] Fought in the strife for Liberty  
 And sealed their faith in blood;  
 But never yet beat hearts as proud  
 As those which Ireland gave.<sup>20</sup>

## Conclusion

The sentiments heard within American Civil War songs written by and about the Irish experience of the conflict reveal accounts and events about the military service of Irish-born and descended soldiers in the Union and Confederate armies, extolling their actions in engagements and reasons for serving, what they were fighting for, home-front support and opinion, and messages of ultimate loyalty to America and commitment to the ideals of the nation. They highlight an additional way the diaspora articulated their war views. These ballad sources should be placed alongside public speeches, wartime writings and memoirs. They are important because they detail another understanding of how the diaspora reacted to the Civil War and how some of its members used song and music culture to spread messages about their battlefield

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<sup>20</sup> *In Memory of the Fallen Dead of the Irish Brigade*, William Collins, quoted by Corby, *Ibid.*, 196-196.

engagements and opinions about contemporary political issues. They gave voice to the unsung influence of Irish culture and devotion to the Union and Confederate causes, and later to reconciliation and propagation of the United States' future. Their sentiments and expressions of American identity, commitment to the causes of liberty, democracy and republicanism, and the continued articulation of American identity provides a counter narrative to existing scholarship. This needs to be considered in future study, especially in relation to how the diaspora expressed its established sense of Americanness.

On the surface, the vast majority of the approximately 150 songs and lyrical pieces analysed for this study centred on the military side of the Irish American Civil War experience. Verses penned in honour of the Union Army's Irish Brigade and its composite regiments, especially its founding 69<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment and its previous state militia incarnation, dominated the singing culture of Irish-born and descended soldiers and their families. Despite examples relating to comparable Irish Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Illinois Union Army regiments, and equivalent Irish Louisiana and other Confederate units, the 69<sup>th</sup> New York and Irish Brigade received the strongest lyrical emphasis. While further Irish American Civil War studies will likely continue a developing trend moving away from Irish Brigade and Irish New York prominence, culturally there remains an argument that the reason these two main subjects have received so much attention is because they were the most predominant across society and wartime recollections.

Virtually all examples quoted in this study sang to the experience of all Irish-born and descended soldiers and, by extension, their home-front families. A song about a 69<sup>th</sup> New York soldier could apply to a 9<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts soldier. If passing references to a fictional lyrical soldier's ethnicity are removed, lyrics could apply to

anyone fighting. As seen specifically with the conflation of *Camp Song of the Irish Brigade*, which began as a ballad about Illinois regiments and became one about those from the eastern states, in most lyrical cases it did not matter which particular unit was the central focus. The common sentiments of fighting bravely on the battlefield, of defending the Union, or in some cases Confederate, cause, upholding the flag and the ideals of the home nation were universal. This lyrical and thematic malleability was crucial to songwriters' intent: it added to the message that the Irish fought in the Civil War for the same reasons and in the same manner as their American compatriots. Much of the lyrical Irish Brigade focus and experience could thus apply beyond the diaspora.

To be sure, some song lyrics were more specific to detailed events in Irish American Civil War history. The military focus included references to battles that were, for example, just about the engagement of the 69<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia at the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861 or the Irish Brigade at the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862. As argued, these lyrical reports and song stories followed traditional balladry news reporting styles, providing accounts that could be disseminated and sung around home-front society alongside official war and newspaper reports. Just this aspect of song lyrics alone, including the many hundreds that were not solely focused on Irish Union and Confederate military examples, should be used by Civil War scholars for further analysis. Songs provide distinct interpretations of battles, skirmishes and overall war service, presenting differing source examples that compare and run counter to more traditional sources and conflict histories.

Moreover, songs about the Irish American Civil War experience reveal how important the *military* aspect was to the diaspora. The fact that so many songs were

about key figures for society to emulate, like Generals Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher, and used military service to reinforce diaspora loyalty to the nation, indicated these were part of a continued response to latent anti-Irish nativism. Yet, they were also mostly a way to repeat the sentiments that Erin's sons had also become Columbia's. One crucial area missing in scholarship has been the link between cultural articulations generated in response to political developments during the war. As demonstrated, either songs did not bother to mention conscription and drafts protests or, like the sentiment heard in *Paddy the Loyal*, they sought to criticise the diaspora itself for any seeming sign of American disloyalty. Serving the country, sacrificing for the country, showing commitment to the country: these were all fundamental lyrical messages heard within Irish wartime ballads.

At the heart of the arguments in this study, and at the core of Irish American Civil War songs, was the repeated refrain about how American the Irish service and singing culture was in the 1860s. The sentiments expressed in these sources were essentially American, be that Union or Confederate national identity. Lyrics suggest that those impacted by the war were not *becoming* American. Nor, to an extent, had they *become* American. They *were* Americans. Fighting service reinforced this. It is noticeable how song lyrics often sung about American solidarity first and foremost. The case of Michael Corcoran in particular highlights this fundamental aspect to the greatest extent. Yet arguably, what Irish American Civil War ballads sung about was an essential feeling that the United States had become the Irish diaspora's home. The American identity portrayed in ballad verses was also one of home identity and association. As highlighted, this has implications for the way a sense of Irish identity was still present in the form of references to Irish symbology, anglicised Irish-language phrases and references to past foreign military history. However, these Irish

cultural references were circulating throughout society, stressing a broader familiarity and dilution of this heritage within Union and Confederate states.

Where this has broader implications for future study is in relation to Irish nationalist views and the constant marrying of Irish independence desires and the Fenians' fight for such a future with American soldiering aid. As shown, if lyrics are taken literally, then the collective pronoun use of 'our' – as heard at the end of *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade's* (1863) for example – confuses *who* would fight in the island of Ireland. The 'helping hand' offered freely in the ballad was an American one.<sup>21</sup> Even if Irish-born and descended soldiers returned, lyrical rhetoric presented the argument that American soldiers would be fighting too. Future scholarship on Fenian cultural arguments and articulations would do well to analyse not only how the American Civil War impacted and hampered independence goals in the 1860s, but also articulated doubts and conflicts within Irish transnational nationalist stances.

In addition, as this study has highlighted, traditional Irish music and song influence and contribution to the formation of American musical culture, particularly through the repeated and adapted use of old eighteenth century tunes to form the foundation for Civil War songs, was extensive. Ballads written in the wartime period entered a pre-existing American musical culture shaped by, and including, many popular strands of Irish, Scottish and Celtic ballad traditions. If anything, the pervasive use of Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* song tunes, American cultural adoption of Irish language phrases and ethnic symbology, and the presence of numerous Irish related ballads within wider wartime lyrical productions reflected the inherent Irishness of American music by the mid-nineteenth century. Yet, while songs may have been sung with an Irish accent, they were also sung with an American

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<sup>21</sup> *Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade* (Boston: Horace Partridge, 1863).

voice. Indeed, the Irish American Civil War songs in this study also demonstrate how American the diaspora's music had become. The use of American tunes such as *Hail, Columbia*, and the ever-evolving Irish, Union and Confederate use of *The Irish Jaunting Car* and Harry Macarthy's *Bonnie Blue Flag* tune reveal how music and song origins were not limited to the communities that created them. Traditional Irish songs and musical tunes were therefore American. They were not exclusive to the diaspora by the Civil War era.

Whilst this study has focused on the sentiments and culture of Irish American Civil War songs, predominately from the four years of the conflict itself, the broader culture of Irish song and music within the United States contributed to an extensive interconnected network of Irish and American lyrical and ballad tune publications in the nineteenth century. Publishers and musical hall patrons circulated Irish wartime songs, which in turn projected the overall message of the diaspora's willingness to see the war effort through and the American home nation reconciled. Furthermore, the symbiotic relationship between song printing production and their performance, particularly (though not exclusively) relating to Irish examples in the Civil War era, is an area of future scholarship. The role music hall theatres and patrons, like Tony Pastor, had in shaping the mainstream culture of the war through the use of contemporary Irish songs and traditional ballad tunes to construct it, is something only touched upon in this study. Yet, the topic of nineteenth American music culture, theatre history and Irish American transnational cultural history is significant.

Continued production of Irish American Civil War songs also reflected the fundamental fact that Irish-born and descended soldiers enlisted and served throughout the conflict, even as war-weariness pervaded Union and Confederate societies. Later enlistees had their own experiences that needed to be written into song

in 1864 and 1865. Sentiments and the memory of their fighting legacy were still expressed in American balladry through to, and including, the First World War. This cultural continuation challenges the impression of an Irish abandonment of the war effort that Susannah Ural put forward in her work. Therefore, Irish American Civil War songs produced and disseminated during the conflict, postbellum recollections and memoirs that included reference to them, and echoes of their sentiments and themes in American songs at the turn of the twentieth century, expose how expansive Irish musical and lyrical influence was across the United States.

This cultural transnationalism was similar to a sentiment expressed by Peter Welsh to his Irish father-in-law in June 1863. Although discussing the diaspora's impact across the United States, the same description can be applied to the level of importance Irish cultural productions, including songs and music, had across the nation by the mid-nineteenth century:

[Ireland's] sons...are interwoven like a network over the whole face of the country. Their influence is felt in every section and it is increasing...The Irish element will be the most powerful and influential in the land.<sup>22</sup>

Welsh's words about the establishment of Irish America would be echoed over 150 years later at the White House. In his 2017 St. Patrick's Day speech, Taoiseach Enda Kenny commented on the significant contribution Irish and Ulster-Scots migrants had made in United States history. He included reference to the countless Irish soldiers whose names were scattered in the wind, who fought and died in the fields of American Civil War battles for the Union and Confederacy, and in subsequent

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<sup>22</sup> Peter Welsh to Patrick Prendergast, 1 June 1863, *Irish Green and Union Blue: The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh, Color Sergeant 28th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, eds. Lawrence Frederick Kohl & Margaret Cassé Richard (New York: Fordham University, 1986), 102.

American conflicts. He noted how Irish-born and descended soldiers ‘beat the daylights out of each other in Fredericksburg and Gettysburg...They fought in every war for America and died for America’. Kenny tied this service to a suggestion – the same suggestion heard in Civil War ballads – that the Irish fought for the United States because of their commitment to the ideals of the nation that became their home. Moreover, this home that was infused with Irish song. Kenny referred to the enormous impact the sons and daughters of Erin had ‘through music and culture, and so many other areas’ in society.<sup>23</sup> Irish American Civil War ballads were part of this cultural impression and legacy.

Certainly within the context of the war specifically, and within mid-nineteenth century Irish American migration history more broadly, the approximately 200,000 born and greater numbers of subsequent descended soldiers and their families are a minority. Yet, that does not take away from their significance to the history of the conflict and the diaspora’s experience in the 1860s. When describing the devastation caused to Irish Brigade numbers after the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, W.F. Lyons stated that the Irish contribution to the war effort was ‘few, and faint, but fearless still!’<sup>24</sup> It was an apt portrayal that, by extension, applied to the whole Irish experience of the conflict. Irish-born and descended American citizens’ martial and cultural contribution to the nation as the embodiment of true American patriotism were emphasised throughout the Civil War. ‘The Soldier, bard and Patriot, were mingled in the man!’ as Michael O’Riely’s *Irish Volunteers* song extolled.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Taoiseach Enda Kenny, ‘Friends of Ireland Luncheon’ St. Patrick’s Day Speech, White House, Washington D.C., 16 March 2017.

<sup>24</sup> W.F. Lyons, *Brigadier General T. F. Meagher; His Political and Military Career, With Selections From His Speeches and Writings* (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson, 1871), 97.

<sup>25</sup> *The Irish Volunteers*, Michael O’Riely (New York: James Wrigley, 1862).



Another contemporaneous wartime ballad reiterated this same point. ‘Music, mirth and song, through our land, predominate’, its lyrics sang.<sup>26</sup> Much of that music, mirth and song during the American Civil War was sung with an Irish spirit enthused with an inherent sense of American identity and association. When Pat Murphy sang around the campfire with his lilting voice, Irish traditional tunes and expressions could be heard, but they were couched with red, white and blue feeling. These sentiments, strewn through the pages of surviving songsheets, songsters, and in memoirs and accounts, gave voice to the Irish American Civil War contribution. The spirit they sung about was one of an Irish Americanness, where American identity came to the fore, was enhanced by the conflict and spread throughout wartime musical culture and song expressions. They should neither be forgotten or remain unsung in transnational studies that seek to understand the sentiments and culture of the Irish American Civil War experience.

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<sup>26</sup> *March of the New-York Volunteers* (New York: H. De Marsan, 1861).

### Appendix 1: List of Irish American Civil War Songs

TITLE	DATE	LYRICIST	TUNE	PUBLISHER	PUBLICATION
<i>A Copy of Four Verses of Poetry Being Verses... Career Of Brigadier General Corcoran</i>	1864 (April)	Lieutenant Manus	Unknown	New York	<i>Harper's New Monthly Magazine</i>
<i>A Ballad For The Young South</i>	1862	Thomas Brennan	Unknown	West & Johnson, Richmond	<i>War Songs of the South</i>
<i>A Crimean Episode</i>	1861 (Sept.)	Bayard Taylor	<i>The Girls We Left Behind Us</i>	Oliver Ditson, Boston	<i>Dwight's Journal of Music</i>
<i>A Lamentation on the American War – Awful Battle at Vicksburg</i>	1863	P.J. Fitzpatrick	Unknown	Ireland	Songsheet
<i>A New Song on the American War</i>	1863	Unknown	Unknown	James Wrigley, Jr., Manchester	Songsheet
<i>A New Song on the Last Battle Fought in America</i>	1862	Unknown	Unknown	Ireland	Songsheet
<i>A Serenade in Camp</i>	1862 (Feb.)	37 <sup>th</sup> New York 'Irish Rifles' soldier	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>America to Ireland</i>	1868	James G. Clark	Unknown	Unknown	Music scorebook
<i>Battle of Bull Run</i>	1861	F. Collins	Unknown	H. De Marsan and James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Battle of Bull's Run</i>	1861	Arthur McCann	<i>American Star</i>	Unknown, America	Songsheet
<i>Camp Song of the Chicago Irish Brigade</i>	1861	P.T. Hade	Unknown	Root & Cady, Chicago	Music scorebook
<i>Cead Mille Fealthe – A Hundred Thousand Welcomes</i>	1864 (June)	Thomas M. Brown	<i>The Pretty Girl Milking Her Cow</i>	Oliver Ditson, Boston	Music scorebook
<i>Col. Corcoran and the Prince of Wales</i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Col. Owens' Gallant Irish Volunteers</i>	1861	Arthur McFadden	<i>IJC/BBF</i>	A.W. Aunder, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>Comrades of the Cannon</i>	c.1863	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>Corcoran's Ball</i>	1863	John Mahon	<i>Lannigan's Ball</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>Corcoran's Irish Legion</i>	1863	Eugene T. Johnston	<i>The Flag of Our Union</i>	Marsan, NY Partridge, Boston	Songsheet

<i>Corcoran's Irish Legion</i>	1863 (Aug.)	Richard Oulahan	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>Corcoran's Zouaves</i>	1863 (Nov.)	Richard Oulahan	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>Corcoran! The Prisoner of War</i>	1862 (Sept.)	Richard Oulahan	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>Corcoran to His Richmond, Or 'I Would Not Take Parole'</i>	1861	'Words and Music by an Irishman'	Unknown	Horace Partridge, Boston	Songsheet
<i>Corporal Kelly</i>	1862	Unknown	<i>Barnaby Finegan</i>	Dick & Fitzgerald, New York	<i>Camp-Fire Songster</i>
<i>The Cry Is Mac, My Darling</i>	1864 (Sept.)	Irish 1 <sup>st</sup> Division, 2 Army Corp soldier	<i>Oh, My Nora Creina Dear</i>	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>Erin's Dixie</i>	1863	Unknown	<i>Dixie</i>	H.C. Clarke, Vicksburg	<i>Southern Flag Song Book</i>
<i>Escape of Meagher</i>	1852	Unknown	Unknown	Haly, Cork	Songsheet
<i>The Escape of Stephens, The Fenian Chief</i>	1865	Unknown	<i>Shan Van Vocht</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Father of All Songs</i>	1864	William Dunne	<i>The Glorious Sixty-Ninth</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Fenian Blood-Hounds</i>	1866	William Case	Unknown	Unknown, Canada	Songsheet
<i>Fenians Ever More</i>	1866	Unknown	Unknown	George D. Russell & Company, Boston	Songsheet
<i>The Fenian Brigade!</i>	1862	Unknown	<i>Red, White and Blue</i>	Partridge, Boston Wrigley, NY	Songsheet
<i>The Finnegins, Or Down to Eastport Town</i>	1866	Frank Wilder	Unknown	Oliver Ditson, Boston	Music scorebook
<i>Free and Easy of Our Union!</i>	1861	Unknown	<i>Free and Easy Still</i>	Boston, Horace Partridge	Songsheet
<i>The Gallant 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment</i>	1862	Unknown	<i>Red, White and Blue</i>	Horace Partridge H. De Marsan	Songsheet
<i>The Gallant Sons of Erin</i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>Gay is the Life of a Fighting America</i>	c.1864	Unknown	<i>Flamaig OFlanagans</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Gleam of Hope!</i>	c.1865	James Tully	<i>Adieu, My Native Land, Adieu</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Glorious 69<sup>th</sup></i>	1861	Unknown	<i>The Glorious Sixty-Ninth</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Green Above the Red</i>	c.1860	William H. Lindsey	<i>There's Whiskey in the Jar</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>Harp of Old Erin &amp; Banner of Stars</i>	1861	Unknown	<i>St. Patrick's Day</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet

<i>The Hero Without a Name</i>	1865-1866	Col. W.S. Hawkins	Unknown	Spottiswoode & Co., London	<i>War Lyrics and Songs of the South</i>
<i>In Memoriam</i>	1863 (Nov.)	P.L. of Boston	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>The Irish-American Army</i>	c.1866	Corporal Barney	Unknown	W.H. Murphy, New York	<i>Stephens' Fenian Songster</i>
<i>Irish Brigade – version of Camp Song of the (Chicago) Irish Brigade</i>	1861-1862	Unknown	<i>Red, White and Blue</i>	A.W. Auner, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Brigade</i>	1862 (Jan.)	Unknown	<i>Red, White and Blue</i>	Horace Partridge, Boston	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Brigade</i>	1863	Kate C.M.	<i>My Heart's in Old Ireland</i>	A. Winch, Philadelphia	<i>Continental Songster</i>
<i>The Irish Brigade</i>	1863	Hugh F. McDermott	Unknown	Frank McElroy, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Brigade</i>	1864 (July)	Bessie of Clifton, Long Island	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>Irish Brigade at Freds'burg</i>	1863 (Jan.)	Alexis	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>The Irish Brigade in America/The Soldier's Letter from America</i>	1863	Unknown	Unknown	James Lindsay, Glasgow	Songster
<i>The Irish Dead on Fred. Heights</i>	1863	Kate M. Boylan	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>The Irish for McClellan</i>	1864 (Oct.)	T.F.L.	<i>Granuaile</i>	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>Irish Patriots of '98</i>	c.1860	Henry Sherman Backus	<i>Bruce's Address</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Irish Volunteer</i>	c.1862	Arthur McCann	<i>The Yankee Man of War</i>	A.W. Auner, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>Irish Volunteers – Penn'a's Gallant 69<sup>th</sup></i>	1863	M. Fay	<i>McKenney's Dream</i>	J.H. Johnson, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>Irish Volunteer</i>	1861	Unknown	<i>IJC/BBF</i>	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Volunteer</i>	1862	S. Fillmore Bennett	<i>The Irish Volunteer</i>	H.M. Higgins, Chicago	Music scorebook
<i>The Irish Volunteer, No. 3</i>	1862	Tony Pastor	<i>IJC/BBF</i>	H. De Marsan and James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Volunteers</i>	1862	Michael O'Riely	<i>IJC/BBF</i>	H. De Marsan and James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Picket</i>	c.1862	Unknown	Unknown	Partridge, Boston	Songsheet
<i>The Irishman's Greeting to America</i>	1853	Edmund Ruth John B. Stiegler	Unknown	Oliver Ditson, Boston	Music scorebook
<i>Kelly's Irish Brigade</i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown	Missouri	Songsheet
<i>The Late Captain E.K. Butler</i>	1864 (July)	Mrs. Sinclair Lithgow	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>

<i>Long Live the Sixty-Ninth</i>	1861	Mr. Mullaly	Unknown	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>March of the New-York Volunteers</i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>New Song on the Dreadful Engagement, and Tremendous Loss of the Irish in America</i>	1862	Unknown	Unknown	Ireland	Songsheet
<i>The New York Volunteer</i>	1862	Thomas Donnelly	<i>Whisky in the Jar</i>	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>The New York Volunteer</i>	1862	Frank Spear Sam Long	Unknown	H. De Marsan & James Wrigley	Songsheet
<i>New York Volunteer</i>	1862	Frank Spear	Unknown	Dick & Fitzgerald, NY	<i>Camp-Fire Songster</i>
<i>No Irish Need Apply (NINA)</i>	1862	Kathleen O'Neill	<i>NINA</i>	Ditson, Boston Johnson and Lee & Walker, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>No Irish Need Apply</i>	1862	John F. Poole	<i>NINA</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>No Irish Need Apply</i>	1864	Kathleen O'Neill	<i>NINA</i>	S. Brainard, Ohio	Music scorebook
<i>No Irish Need Apply</i>	1864	Unknown	<i>NINA</i>	William A. Stephen, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>The O'Lincon Family</i>	1862 (May)	Wilson Flagg	Unknown	Oliver Ditson, Boston	<i>Dwight's Journal of Music</i>
<i>O'Toole &amp; McFinnigan on the War</i>	1863	Unknown	Unknown	Boston: Horace Partridge	Songsheet
<i>Our Brave Irish Champions</i>	1861	Thomas Walsh	Unknown	Haly, Cork	Songsheet
<i>Our Country's Heroes</i>	1864	Unknown	<i>Red, White and Blue</i>	Marsan and Wrigley, NY	Songsheet
<i>Our Own Flag of Green</i>	c.1860	Unknown	<i>Our Own Flag of Green</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Paddy's Lament</i>	1864	John Ross Dix	<i>I'm Sitting on the Stile</i>	Charles Magnus, New York	Songsheet
<i>Paddy the Loyal</i>	1863	'By Himself'	<i>Wild Goose Nation</i>	A. Winch, Philadelphia	<i>Continental Songster</i>
<i>Pat Malloy</i>	c.1860	Unknown	<i>Pat Malloy</i>	Horace Partridge, Boston	Songsheet
<i>Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade</i>	1863	Unknown	<i>Think of Your Head in the Morning</i>	Horace Partridge, Boston James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Pat's Opinion of the Stars and Stripes</i>	1862	John F. Poole	<i>Darling Ould Stick</i>	Dick & Fitzgerald, Philadelphia	<i>Camp-Fire Songster</i>
<i>Pat Rooney and His Little Ones</i>	1862 (May)	Unknown	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American Sunday Transcript</i>
<i>Return of Gen. Corcoran...the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup></i>	1862	William P. Ferris	<i>The Glorious Sixty-Ninth</i>	Horace Partridge, Boston	Songsheet

<i>Return of Pat Malloy</i>	c.1865	Unknown	<i>The Sons of Molly Maguire</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Reynolds' Letter on the American War!</i>	1862	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>Save the Constitution</i>	1862	Timothy B. O'Regan	<i>The Sons of Molly Maguire</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>Songs of the Camp</i>	1862	Bayard Taylor	<i>The Girls We Left Behind Us</i>	Dick & Fitzgerald, New York	<i>Camp-Fire Songster</i>
<i>Song for the Irish Brigade</i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown	John Hopkins, New Orleans	<i>Hopkins' New-Orleans 5 Cent Song-Book</i>
<i>The Sons of Erin's Isle</i>	c.1861	Unknown	Unknown	W.S. Fortey, London	Songsheet
<i>St. Patrick's Day, No. 2</i>	1862	Unknown	<i>St. Patrick's Day</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>To A Brother Fighting for the Union</i>	1861	Mary J. Higgins	Unknown	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>To the Glorious 69<sup>th</sup></i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Union Volunteer</i>	1864	Unknown	Unknown	Dick & Fitzgerald, New York	<i>Harry Pell's Ebony Songster</i>
<i>War Democratic View of McClellan's Nomination</i>	1864 (Oct.)	Corporal Casey Solus	<i>Ould Ireland, You're My Darling</i>	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American The New York World</i>
<i>War Song of the Irish Brigade</i>	1861 (Nov.)	Thomas J. MacEvily	<i>The Star Spangled Banner</i>	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>War Song of the New-York 69<sup>th</sup> Regiment</i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>We Will Have the Union Still</i>	1861	Robert Smith	<i>Free and Easy Still</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>We'll Fight for Uncle Sam</i>	c.1861	Unknown	<i>Whiskey in the Jar</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>Wearing of the Green</i>	1865	Dion Boucicault E.H. House	<i>Wearing of the Green</i>	Ditson, Boston Dodworth, NY Johnson, Philadelphia	Songsheet Music scorebook
<i>What Irish Boys Can Do – Answer to 'NINA'</i>	1863	William Sutherland	<i>IJC/BBF</i>	H. De Marsan, New York A.W. Auner, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>What Irishmen Have Done</i>	c.1866-1870	Eugene T. Johnston	<i>IJC/BBF</i>	Charles Magnus, New York	Songsheet
<i>When This Cruel War is Over, No. 2</i>	1863	Unknown	<i>When This Cruel War Is Over</i>	Horace Partridge, Boston	Songsheet
<i>Who Will Care for Micky Now?</i>	1863	Eugene T. Johnston	<i>Who Will Care for Mother Now?</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet

<i>Written on Hearing the Death of Gen. Corcoran</i>	1864 (Jan.)	Mary of Montreal	Unknown	Lynch & Cole, New York	<i>The Irish-American</i>
<i>Young America and Old Ireland</i>	1862	Unknown	<i>Darling Ould Stick</i>	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>Yankee Doodle's Ride to Richmond</i>	1862	Rev. E.P. Birch	<i>Yankee Doodle</i>	West & Johnson, Richmond	<i>War Songs of the South</i>
<i>The 69<sup>th</sup> Brigade</i>	1862	F. Collins	<i>The Night Templer's</i>	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet

**Appendix 2: *The Irish Jaunting Car* and *The Bonnie Blue Flag* Variant Music and Song Publications in the American Civil War Era<sup>1</sup>**

TITLE	DATE	LYRICIST	PUBLISHER	PUBLICATION
<b><i>Irish Jaunting Car</i></b>				
<i>The Irish Jaunting Car</i>	1854	Valentine Vousden	Dublin	Music scorebook
<i>The Irish Jaunting Car</i>	1854	Unknown	H. Such, London	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Jaunting Car</i>	c.1855	Unknown	J.O. Bebbington, Manchester	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Jaunting Car</i>	c.1854-1855	Unknown	Andrews, New York	Songsheet
<b>Other Variations</b>				
<i>Larry Doolan</i>	c.1855	Unknown	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>Larry Doolain, or The Irish Jaunting Car</i>	c.1855		J.F. Nugent & Co., Dublin	Songsheet
<i>Mickey Doolin and the Irish Jaunting Car</i>	c.1855	Unknown	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>Larry Maher's Big Five-Gallon Jar</i>	c.1860	Unknown	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>A New and Favourite Song Called Mick of Castlebar</i>	c.1861	Unknown	Haly, Cork	Songsheet
<i>Dublin Jaunting Car</i>	1863	Unknown	Oliver Ditson, Boston	Music scorebook
<i>Mother on the Brain</i>	1864	John C. Cross	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Homespun Dress, or The Southern Girl</i>	1864	Carrie Bell Sinclair	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>The Southern Girl, or The Homespun Dress</i>	1865	Carrie Bell Sinclair	A.E. Blackmar	Music scorebook
<b><i>Irish Volunteer Songs</i></b>				
<i>Irish Volunteers of 1860</i>	1860	Unknown	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>Col. Owens' Gallant Irish Volunteers</i>	1861	Arthur McFadden	A.W. Auner, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Volunteers</i>	1862	Michael O'Riely	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Volunteers</i>	1862	Michael O'Riely	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>The Irish Volunteer</i>	1862	Joe English	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>Irish Volunteer, No.3</i>	1862	Tony Pastor	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>Irish Volunteer, No.3</i>	1862	Tony Pastor	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>New York Volunteer</i>	1862	Frank Spear	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet
<i>New York Volunteer</i>	1862	Frank Spear	James Wrigley, New York	Songsheet
<i>The New York Volunteer</i>	1862	Frank Spear	Dick & Fitzgerald, New York	<i>Camp-Fire Songster</i>

<sup>1</sup> All songs listed here share the same tune and demonstrate the widespread dissemination of *The Irish Jaunting Car* melody.



<i>Irish Volunteers: Penn'a's Gallant 69<sup>th</sup></i>	1863	M. Fay	J.H. Johnson, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<b><i>What Irish Boys Can Do</i></b>				
<i>What Irish Boys Can Do – Answer to 'No Irish Need Apply'</i>	1863	William Sutherland	H. De Marsan, New York	Songsheet (x8 printed variations)
<i>What Irish Boys Can Do – Answer to 'No Irish Need Apply'</i>	1863	William Sutherland	A.W. Auner, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>What Irishmen Have Done</i>	c.1866- 1870	Eugene T. Johnston	Charles Magnus, New York	Songsheet
<b><i>The Bonnie Blue Flag – Confederate</i></b>				
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1861	Harry Macarthy	A.E. Blackmar & Bro., New Orleans	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1861	Harry Macarthy	Horace Partridge, Boston	Songsheet
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1861	Harry Macarthy	Poet's Box, Glasgow	Songsheet
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1861	Harry Macarthy	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>Additional words to "Bonnie Blue flag" as sung by the Missourians during the war</i>	1861	Unknown	Unknown, handwritten	Handwritten sheet
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy	A.E. Blackmar & Bro., New Orleans	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy	A.J. Boucher, New Orleans	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1861	Harry Macarthy	A.E. Blackmar & Bro., New Orleans	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy	Miller & Beacham, Baltimore	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy	Hime & Son, Liverpool	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy	Hime & Son, Liverpool	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy	Unknown	Songsheet
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag With Brilliant Variations for the Piano</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy S. Schesinger	A.E. Blackmar & Bro., New Orleans	Music scorebook
<i>Improvisation on the Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Thod Von la Hache	A.E. Blackmar & Bro.	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag Quickstep</i>	1862	J.C. Viereck	Blackmar & Co., New Orleans	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Harry Macarthy	J.W. Randolph, Richmond	<i>Songs of the South</i>
<i>Bonnie Blue Flag With Brilliant Variations</i>	1863	Charles Grobe	Lee & Walker, Philadelphia	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1863	Harry Macarthy	Blackmar & Bro., Augusta	<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag Song Book</i>

<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1863	Harry Macarthy	J.W. Randolph, Richmond	<i>Songs of the South</i>
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1864	Harry Macarthy	Edward Hale & Co., Cheltenham	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1864	Harry Macarthy	H.H.K. Elliot, Philadelphia	Music scorebook
<i>Les Marseillaise et le Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Octamie Romey	Blackmar & Co., New Orleans	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1864	Harry Macarthy	J.W. Randolph	<i>Songs of the South</i>
<i>An Addition to the Bonnie Blue Flag – A Tribute to True Kentuckians</i>	1866	Unknown	Spottiswoode & Co., London	<i>War Lyrics and Songs of the South</i>
<b><i>The Bonnie Blue Flag – Union</i></b>				
<i>Hurrah for the Banner of Red, White and Blue</i>	1861	Thomas M. Brown	Oliver Ditson, Boston	Music scorebook
<i>Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett	Charles Magnus, New York	Songsheet
<i>Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett	A.W. Auner, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett	J.H. Johnson, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag, also a Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett	S.T. Gordon, New York	Songsheet
<i>Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett M.H. Frank	J. Marsh, Philadelphia	Music scorebook
<i>Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett M.H. Frank	S.T. Gordon, New York	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	M.H. Frank	S.T. Gordon, New York	Music scorebook
<i>Union Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett	H. De Marsan, New York	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Red, White and Blue, Or Our Beautiful Flag</i>	1862	J.C.J.	Oliver Ditson, Boston	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Red, White and Blue, Or Our Beautiful Flag</i>	1862	J.C.J.	Oliver Ditson, Boston	Songsheet
<i>The Bonnie Red, White and Blue, Or Our Beautiful Flag</i>	1862	J.C.J.	A.W. Auner, Philadelphia	Music scorebook
<i>Glorious Old Flag Reply to BBF</i>	1862	Mrs. C. Sterett	J. Marsh, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>The Flag With Thirty Four Stars, Or Hurrah! For the Dear Flag With Every Stripe and Star</i>	1862	General W.H. Hayward	A.C. Peters & Bro., Cincinnati	Music scorebook
<i>The Flag With Thirty Four Stars</i>	1862	General W.H. Hayward	J.H. Johnson, Philadelphia	Songsheet
<i>The Flag With Thirty Four Stars</i>	1863	General W.H. Hayward	A.C. Peters & Bro., Cincinnati	Music scorebook
<i>Reply to the Bonnie Blue Flag</i>	1863	Mrs. C. Sterett M.H. Frank	J. Marsh, Philadelphia	Music scorebook
<i>The Bonnie Flag With</i>	1863	Colonel J.L. Geddes	Balmer & Weber,	Music scorebook

<i>the Stars and Stripes</i>			Saint Louis	'30 <sup>th</sup> Edition'
<i>The Bonnie Flag With the Stars and Stripes</i>	1863	Colonel J.L. Geddes	Balmer & Weber, Saint Louis	Music scorebook '50 <sup>th</sup> Edition'
<i>The Bonnie Flag With the Stars and Stripes</i>	1863	Colonel J.L. Geddes	Balmer & Weber, Saint Louis	Music scorebook '100 <sup>th</sup> Edition'
<i>The Bonnie Flag With the Stars and Stripes</i>	1863	Colonel J.L. Geddes	Balmer & Weber, Saint Louis	Music scorebook '50 <sup>th</sup> Thousand Edition'

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